A FARTHER DEFENCE OF THE METHODISTS, IN LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE

REV. W. RUSSEL,

Curate of Perſhore,

IN ANSWER TO HIS HINTS

TO THE

METHODISTS and DISSENTERS.

WESLEY COLLEGE PODIMORE

BY JOSEPH BENSON.

Truth is great and will prevail. APOC.

If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. JOHN vii. 17.

Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God: but ſhun profane and vain bablings, for they will increaſe unto more ungodlineſs. 2 TIM. ii. 15. 16.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS many of my Friends wonder that I would take any notice of Mr. *Ruſſel's Hints*; I think proper to obſerve here, that although his *Remarks* may not deſerve *notice*, yet the truths contained in the following pages, eſpecially in the 2d, 3d, and 4th Letters, deſerve to be known: and it is a conviction of their importance to the further progreſs of pure and genuine Chriſtianity, that induces me to take this occaſion of laying them before the public. If the Reader have patience to go through the *firſt* Letter, which, though upon matters of leſſer moment, I was under a neceſſity of writing to clear the way for what follows, I hope he will find ſatisfaction in the remaining part of the book, and will not think his labour loſt in attentively peruſing it.

JOSEPH BENSON.

LETTER I.

REV. SIR,

ALTHOUGH I do not love controverſy on any ſubject, eſpecially on ſubjects of a ſacred nature, yet as it is not without its uſe, and in the preſent ſtate of things is often neceſſary, and even unavoidable, I was not ſorry to ſee your Remarks on my *Defence of the Methodiſts*. Nor ſhall I be ſorry if two or three more anſwers to it ſhould make their appearance. It is *Truth*, and truth *alone*, that I ſeek, and truth will never laſtingly ſuffer by diſcuſſion; although, it may be injured, for a time, by falling into the hands of inſufficient defenders. But, in that caſe, God will not fail to raiſe up others, who will be found more adequate to the important taſk. So that, in the end, his cauſe ſhall aſſuredly conquer: for, *Truth is great and will prevail.*

That I have truth on my ſide, I have no doubt. The careful peruſal of your *Hints*, has not cauſed me to alter my ſentiments in any one inſtance. Nor would I have taken the leaſt notice of them had it not been for two reaſons.

1ſt. I thought it probable that they would fall into the hands of ſome, who, not having read my *Defence*, or not being at the pains of comparing it with your Remarks, might, from the ſingle circumſtance of their being unanſwered, conclude they were a refutation of, at leaſt, ſome of the doctrines I had advanced. And 2dly, I wiſhed for an opportunity of bringing again be-

fore the public, and of diſcuſſing more at large two or three points, of no ſmall moment, which in the former publication, I could but juſt mention: and leſt another occaſion of doing this ſhould not ſoon occur, I think it beſt to embrace the preſent. For theſe reaſons, Sir, I again take my pen in hand, and ſhall make it my buſineſs to let nothing in your *Hints* paſs without notice, that appears to me, in any reſpect, to merit it. But I have too much regard for the public, and for the proper uſe of my own time, to reply to every thing you have thought proper to advance in your ſhilling Pamphlet, "the haſty compoſition" (as you tell us p. 47) "of a few days."

Indeed with regard to *brevity*, you yourſelf have facilitated my work not a little. "Within the firſt fourteen pages of your Defence (you ſay p. 6.) there is little that I can object to, your reaſoning is cogent and well founded, for it is built on the rock of our ſalvation, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and therefore it will ſtand." Now in the truths contained in theſe pages, as and attentive and judicious reader will eaſily obſerve the foundation is laid of all that is afterward advanced, ſo that if theſe ſtand, I have no reaſon to fear the ſuperſtructure that is raiſed thereon falling. Add to this, that thoſe parts of my Letters to which you object are but few, and of the reſt you declare yourſelf, p. 43, to be "a warm admirer, and ſincerely wiſh, you ſay, that a ſimilar affection to what (you think) I feel for the divine Immanuel, who ſhed his blood for our ſins on Calvary, was univerſally felt by the Prieſts and people of this land, and through the whole Chriſtian world." Theſe things being conſidered it ſhould ſeem the difference cannot be very great between us, and that a few pages would ſettle it, eſpecially as you promiſe p. 21.

that

that your objections "ſhall be ſtated in a ſpirit of Chriſtian love:" and in a ſpirit of Chriſtian love I hope to conſider and reply to them.

In this ſpirit, indeed, I truſted I had ſtated and laid before the public my objections to divers particulars contained in Doctor Tatham's Sermon; but from *this ſpirit* you think I have *departed* in the 30th page of my publication, and this is your firſt objection. Your words are, "If giving the lie (as p. 30.) be inconſiſtent with Chriſtian meekneſs, why, then moſt certainly you have deviated from thoſe profeſſions you made in the very outſet of your Remarks." I am glad, Sir, that even *you* have found no reaſon to accuſe me of ſuch a deviation, till I have advanced as far as the 30th page, and that this, it ſeems, is the only inſtance, you can produce, in the whole book; eſpecially conſidering that you *yourſelf* are not ſure (you ſay) that ſuch expreſſions, as I have there uſed, "are wholly "inconſiſtent with ſuch a temper, ſince, even "the meek Jeſus uſed that ſtyle, with many other "terms of ſevere reprobation reſpecting the Jews, "John viii. 55." I thank you, Sir, for the excuſe you make for me. But I am not inclined to avail myſelf of it. In matters of this kind I do not wiſh to plead the example of Jeſus. He, as *Son of the Father* and *Lord of the Univerſe*, might uſe language to his ſervants, which thoſe ſervants have no right to uſe one towards another. Becauſe he there terms the Jews *liars*, it does not follow that *we* have a right to give our fellow-creatures ſimilar appellations: even as from his calling the Phariſees *fools* and *blind*, and from his terming Herod a *Fox*, we muſt not think ourſelves juſtified in ſaying to our brother, *Thou fool*, or in giving the name of *Fox* to the Ruler of our people.

But have I, indeed, uſed the ſame language towards Dr. T—, which our Lord uſed towards the Jews? Have I, in plain words, called him a *liar*. Certainly I have not. I am not ſure to what ſentence in that page you refer: but I ſuppoſe it is to the following. "You cannot ſincerely *think*, (I ſay to the Doctor) that all the Methodiſts, Anabaptiſts, and Diſſenters of every kind anſwer this deſcription;" viz. the deſcription the Doctor had given of them, as being "ſelf-taught without power, and ſelf-ordained "without even the appearance of learning, men "out of the meaneſt profeſſions and loweſt oc-"cupations of life, whom had their hearers a "fair opportunity of trying, they would find "more ignorant and unqualified than themſelves, "blind leaders of the blind." "But (I proceed) no doubt you wiſh they did anſwer it; and I fear you wiſh, too, to make the nation believe it; to make them believe what a perſon of much leſs information than you cannot but know to be a *lie*." Now, Sir, I acknowledge this ſentence is *ſevere*, but not more ſo, I think, than the ſubject demanded. Such illiberal treatment of ſo many numerous and reſpectable bodies of people, as the Diſſenters of all kinds and *Methodiſts* are, is *inſufferable* and deſerves the ſevereſt animadverſion. The Doctor could not but know that, taking them in general, they were not the perſons he deſcribed, and therefore was inexcuſable in repreſenting them to the public in that light, eſpecially conſidering the very critical ſtate of the nation at that time, and the conſequences which, there was every reaſon to apprehend, would follow, and which, in fact, did follow, upon his charges being repeated in ſo many churches, and publiſhed and ſpread with ſuch great aſſiduity through the nation. I ſpeak reſpecting

reſpecting the *Mobs* that roſe in Oxford and other places againſt the Methodiſts, not only to the deſtruction of their *property* but the great hazard of their *lives*.

But let me obſerve, Sir, if you have a right, from what I have advanced in that page, to ſay I give Dr. T——, the lie, I fear, before I have done, I ſhall give *you* equal ground of complaint, reſpecting my treatment of yourſelf, and then I may have reaſon to dread the conſequence; for " had you uſed (you ſay) ſuch language to " me, perſonally, moſt probably neither your " ſanctity nor even your age would have pre- " vented you from receiving, what your be- " haviour would ſo juſtly merit,—a *knock-down* " *argument*, not from my tongue, but from an " inſtrument which, perhaps, would make a " more ſenſible impreſſion of its weight, and " power." I preſume you mean your *fiſt*, a *bludgeon*, or a *piſtol*. I fear Sir, you are beginning already, although only in the 2d page of your work, to depart from that ſpirit of meekneſs and love in which you promiſed to ſtate your objections, and that in a *manner* and *degree* in which the example of Chriſt cannot be pleaded in your juſtification. For although he termed the Jews *liars*, he never knocked any of them down. Oh! but, you ſay, " as the inſult is not offered to me, my temper is unruffled." It ſeems, then, Sir, that you do not love your neighbour as yourſelf, as, it appears, you do not reſent the inſult which you think is offered to him, as you would a ſimilar one offered to yourſelf. But, Sir, it appears from this acknowledgment that you are, (to uſe the Apoſtle's expreſſion, Tit. i. 7.) *ſoon angry*, and that it is not an unuſual thing with you to come upon thoſe that affront you with theſe " knock down

arguments." It is well for me that I happen to be ſituated at ſuch a diſtance from you, otherwiſe I might well write this *reply* to your *Hints* with fear and trembling. I am glad, Sir, to find you acknowledging in a Note that this is language "not becoming a Chriſtian Miniſter." I hope you will uſe it no more, but "will remain, as you promiſe, ſo cool, throughout your Epiſtles, as never to fail to expreſs yourſelf in terms becoming the dignity of Chriſtian diſputation."

It was very unfortunate that you ſhould fall into this miſtake at your very entrance on your work, and at the very time when you were about to entreat us "not to deſpiſe your youth." For my part, Sir, although you were an entire ſtranger to me, and I never heard your name mentioned before I ſaw it on the *Title-page* of your book; yet as you were a *Miniſter* of the *eſtabliſhed church*, and a perſon who had been at the pains, not only carefully to *peruſe*, but even to favour me with your Remarks on my Letters, I felt my mind much diſpoſed to reſpect you, and to repreſent you to the public in a favourable point of view. Indeed, Sir, it is natural for us to wiſh our opponents to be viewed by the world as perſons worthy of reſpect; for ſhould we have the advantage over them in the field of controverſy, the more eminent they are, the greater will be the reputation we gain by the conqueſt; or if we be worſted, it is ſurely more to our credit to be foiled by *wiſe men* than by *fools*. It was therefore my intereſt to have you regarded as a perſon of character, and it is quite unpleaſing to ſee you debaſing yourſelf in this manner, in the very 2d page of your work. Some of your readers will doubtleſs infer, from what you have ſaid, that you are, what St. Paul calls,

calls, *a Striker*, and therefore unfit for the Paſtoral Office, while your advice to us "not to deſpiſe your youth," becomes to all more difficult to be taken. For as Cowper juſtly obſerves, ſpeaking of the Clergy,

"We venerate the man whoſe heart is warm
"Whoſe hands are pure, whoſe doctrine and whoſe life,
"Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
"That he is honeſt in the ſacred cauſe.
"To ſuch we render more than mere reſpect,
"*Whoſe actions ſay that they reſpect themſelves.*"

Indeed this is the meaning of the Apoſtle's exhortation to Timothy in the paſſage to which you refer, 1 Epiſtle iv. 12. He means "ſo conduct thyſelf that no man may have any *cauſe* to deſpiſe thee for thy youth," for he adds, *but be thou an example of the believers*, in *word*, in *converſation*, in *charity* (that is *love*) *in ſpirit*, *in faith*, *in purity*. Ita vive, *ſo live* (ſays Grotius) ita te gere, *ſo conduct thyſelf* (ſays Piſcator,) ne merito contemni poſſis, *that thou may not be deſervedly deſpiſed*. Ex conſequente intelligit antecedens, (ſays Vorſtius) quod omittitur, nempe ut inculpate ſe gerat, and juveniles cupiditates fugiat. *The antecedent which is omitted, is underſtood from what follows*, viz. *that he ſhould behave in an unblameable manner* and *ſhun youthful deſires*. *What is wanting in thy age make up* (ſays Eraſmus and Sculteſus) *by the gravity of thy behaviour*, *the innocence of thy life*, and *the excellence of thy doctrine*. I am ſorry, Sir, you ſhould thus overlook the obvious meaning of the Text, for had you attended to it, as you ſeem very deſirous your readers ſhould *not deſpiſe your youth*, and thereby

detract from the weight of your arguments, you doubtleſs would have been more careful ſo to conduct yourſelf, in this controverſy, as to give them no cauſe to deſpiſe it. You certainly would not have ſpoken of *knocking people down*, nor would you have repreſented yourſelf, as you have done page 5. with "the ſpruce head of a Modern young Cleric." What you may preciſely mean by this ſingular phraſeology, I am not ſure. But the moment I read it, it brought to my mind the above mentioned Poet's deſcription of a modern young Clergyman, whom he repreſents, how juſtly we have daily evidence, as

—"Looſe in morals, and in manners vain,
In converſation frivolous, in dreſs
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuſe,
Frequent in park, with Lady at his Side,
Ambling and prattling ſcandal as he goes,
But rare at home, and never at his Books,
Or with his Pen, ſave when he ſcrawls a card:
Conſtant at routs, familiar with a round
Of Ladyſhips, a ſtranger to the poor,
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well prepar'd, by ignorance and ſloth,
By infidelity and love of world,
To make God's work a Sinecure; a ſlave
To his own pleaſure and his Patron's pride."

This deſcription, however cannot ſuit *you*. You undoubtedly are ſometimes at your books, and that you can and do uſe your pen for other purpoſes than writing Cards to Ladies, this your preſent publication is a full proof. Therefore, although you may be "a Modern, young Cleric, with a ſpruce head," yet I muſt caution thoſe of our readers, who do not know you, againſt

againſt conceiving the idea of your bearing any reſemblance to the *beaus* in habiliments of ſanctity, whom the Poet deſcribes. And as I feel it would give me an *unfair* advantage over you, an advantage I do not wiſh, I muſt, before we proceed any further, beg leave to *put off* thoſe "ſapient locks of a full Cauliflower *Perriwig*," with which you have kindly and reſpectfully adorned me, and for your comfort, muſt aſſure you that, though I have been upwards of twenty years in the Miniſtry, my head is neither hoary with age, nor am I a perſon of that venerable appearance your imagination has painted me to be. So that, as to any *weight* my arguments might derive from *theſe qualifications*, and as to any *ſuperiority* I might have over you on *theſe* accounts, of which you ſeem ſo apprehenſive, (p. 5.) you may make yourſelf perfectly eaſy. If I prevail againſt you, as I certainly hope to do, the victory muſt be aſcribed, to *truth*, and *argument*, and not to an *hoary head* or a *Perriwig*.

I preſume, Sir, if you had known theſe things beforehand, you would not have been in ſuch great perplexity, as we find you in the 4th page, "to conſider whether it would be moſt "proper to affix your name to your reply, or "to conceal it." The reaſon of this perplexity you give us. "If the world, you ſay, were to "know that it was written by a young man in "obſcurity, it might have leſs weight with them, "or the motives of his conduct may be more "cenſured, than if publiſhed under anonymous "ſecrecy." The world, Sir, I dare ſay, will allow your reply all the *weight* it has, and as to the *motives* of your conduct, I hardly think they would have been much ſuſpected, had you not, in one of your Notes, given an hint of your

deſire for preferment. And, I think, thoſe that have it in their power, and wiſh well to the Church, ſhould give you a *Living*; were it only for your *kind intentions*, and the encouragement of ſuch as may hereafter be diſpoſed to engage in the ſame ſervice, for you undoubtedly meant, amidſt all your infirmities, to ſerve *her* as well as *yourſelf*. And if you have failed of your purpoſe, your *head* and not your *heart* is in the fault. In a matter of this kind they might take the *will* for the *deed*.

But to return: For the above-mentioned reaſons after we have read on the Title-page, *A few Hints for the conſideration of Methodiſts and other Diſſenters, by William Ruſſel, Curate of Perſhore*, we are given to underſtand page 4, that this ſame *William Ruſſel* has determined to conceal his name! When in peruſing your Pamphlet, I came to this paragraph, I was put to a full ſtop, and had I not learnt from a friend, juſt come from Worceſterſhire, that there certainly was ſuch a place as *Perſhore*, and ſuch a perſon as *William Ruſſel*, who was Curate there, I ſhould have concluded that the name of the *perſon*, at leaſt, was fictitious, and that the real Author of the Publication lay concealed.

It is true, in a Note, which we find at the end of your book, we learn that, although you had at firſt really "intended to conceal yourſelf under the ſignature of a *Miniſter of the Church of England*," yet you afterwards altered your intention in conſequence of the remonſtrance of a friend, who urged that as you had thought proper "to make a perſonal attack upon an in-"dividual, as well as to cenſure a collective "body, it would be acting cowardly not to "avow your name and reſidence." But is it not amazing that you had not the prudence to keep

keep all this to yourſelf? and after, you had determined, contrary to your firſt reſolution, not to turn out this your *firſt begotten child* into the wide world "in an orphan-like character," as you expreſs it, *forlorn* and *unprotected*, but to affix your name to the Title-page, that you did not ſtrike out the above-mentioned paragraph? But I ſuppoſe, as you had written it, and it was now become one of the Members of your own beloved child, you could not find in your heart to ſuffer an amputation of what ſeemed a part of the whole, although now ſuperfluous, and rather an *excreſcence* than a *member*; but reſolved, ſhould the Preſs labour ever ſo much at the unnatural birth, and mankind be ſhocked ever ſo greatly at the monſtrous production, to ſend it abroad in the very ſtate in which it firſt ſhewed itſelf under the forming hand of its *genuine father* and *creator*.

But I will not bear too hard upon you, eſpecially as you are young in years, and "this is the firſt time you have ventured to declare yourſelf an Author, &c." and, in the judgment of moſt of your readers, I believe, *quite ſoon enough*. Nor will I entirely diſappoint the hope and truſt, you ſo ſeriouſly expreſs, that your *Hints*, once in danger of being diſowned, but at laſt happily filiated, ſhall be candidly conſidered and favourably treated. Although I think what you obſerve, and what will readily be allowed, as to their "not being the reſult of deep and long continued meditation, but the haſty compoſition of a few days," will not weigh much, with the more judicious of your readers, to procure for them the "favourable opinion" you ſolicit. A young man, of little reading and little knowledge, whoſe judgment is not yet matured, ſhould not be forward to give to the world "the haſty

haſty compoſition of a few days." It would better become him to follow the direction of the judicious heathen in this caſe, to whoſe advice if you had attended, you would have ſpared me the labour of moſt, if not all of theſe remarks, and yourſelf, perhaps, ſome mortification and pain of mind.

Si quid tamen olim
Scripſeris, in Metii deſcendat judicis aures;
——— nonum prematur in annum,
Membranis intus poſitis, delere licebit
Quod non edideris. Neſcit vox miſſa reverti.

There are many other inconſiſtencies in your remarks which could only have proceeded from your *want of attention*, and *great haſte* to appear in public, as an *Author*. For inſtance, you tell me abruptly, in your firſt remark, where you charge me with giving Dr. T——, the *lie*, and departing from my profeſſion of Chriſtian meekneſs,—that I have run counter to the maxims of worldly politeneſs and a precept of courteſy enjoined by St. Peter, and that if I had made uſe of ſuch language to you in perſon, moſt probably you would have knocked me down: that "the expreſſion was illiberal, and when written and ſent to the preſs certainly implied no ſmall ſhare of rancour." And then you immediately ſay, that "perſonal invective is not your "object: that you have not authority for uſing "ſuch language, having never heard my name "mentioned but once, and then in terms of the "higheſt reſpect," and that now having read my Pamphlet you "have not the leaſt reaſon to think the repreſentation of my character a falſe one;" in ſhort that your "veneration for me is "increaſed, and that you even wiſh to be, (to uſe "your own phraſeology) if not altogether as I am,

"yet

"yet in a great measure partaking of my likeness, "both in learning and piety." Now, Sir, what am I to think of this? How happens it that you thus send forth *bitter* water and *sweet*, at one and the same time, from one and the same fountain? Had you made use of the one kind of language in the beginning, and of the other towards the conclusion of your Pamphlet, or had a few pages intervened, it would have been less wonderful, but that you should thus blow *hot* and *cold* at *one breath*, is indeed extraordinary!

A similar instance we find in the next page. Although you had just informed us that your veneration for the Author had been encreased by reading his Letters, yet you immediately proceed to say, that "such is their incoherency "that you are puzzled to find out a method of "arranging your thoughts in a clear connected "plan." Now, Sir, in what light are we to view this? Are we to conclude that you admire *incoherency*? And that the perusal of an *incoherent work* causes you to venerate its Author? or did you speak without meaning, and, for want of *clearness* in your own head, were you puzzled without a cause? or (which I rather think was the case) did you say this under a consciousness, that your own "want of connexion in your answer to my Letters" (which you there confess) needed some such excuse or apology?

Again (p. 15.) you assure us that what I have advanced is "such trash and falsehood," that you can easily refute it by the help of your natural faculties without the aid of divine illumination. And yet it seems the reading of this "trash and falsehood," greatly increased your veneration for its Author! This Sir, is but a small specimen of the numberless inconsistencies that present themselves in your Letters, inconsistencies

ſiſtencies which lay very great obſtacles, in the way of thoſe, that may be diſpoſed to comply with your earneſt requeſt, and "not to deſpiſe your youth." But to drop this and come to matters of more ſerious diſcuſſion.

"Within the firſt fourteen pages of my Letters you find nothing you ſay, liable to objection ſave one little circumſtance. "In treating (you remark p. 6.) upon the integrity of the Socinian Teachers."—Here let me ſtop you, Sir, I am not *treating* on the *Integrity* of the *Socinian Teachers*. I only mention one inſtance of the integrity of ſome of them, by the by, with a view to illuſtrate and prove a certain point, which is, that not the *ability* nor *integrity* of *any* Teacher merely, but the *Holy Scriptures alone*, are the proper teſt of a doctrine. This is the ſubject I am conſidering in that paſſage, and this *only*. But to permit you to proceed. "In treating on the "Integrity of the Socinian Teachers, you ſay, "that ſome of them have given unequivocal "proofs of that, by renouncing their temporal "emoluments in the Church. Now, I deem "this, (you add,) no proof at all of their integrity, "and for theſe two reaſons. 1. Becauſe they "did not renounce thoſe advantages with the "certain aſſurance of poverty on account of "their profeſſing ſuch tenets, but with a pro-"bable hope of their acquiring much more." This, Sir, remains to be proved, and till it be, my argument abides in full force. But you "think I cannot give you an inſtance where "theſe expectations have not been realized by "the emoluments they have derived from the "ſale and rental of Pews, &c." When you have fully proved that ſuch expectations did really exiſt, previous to their relinquiſhing their benefices, then I will conſider about inſtances.

But

But you have another reaſon to give why their renouncing their emoluments in the Church is no proof of their integrity. "It is but a virtue, "you ſay, proceeding from neceſſity; for as "ſuch opinions are incompatible with the "eſtabliſhed miniſtry of the land, they would "of courſe be compelled to relinquiſh their "benefices, and therefore they renounce what "they will not be ſuffered to hold any longer." Here, I wiſh you had been a little more explicit. Do you mean that a *man's holding*, or that his *propagating* ſuch opinions is incompatible with the eſtabliſhed miniſtry? And what do you intend by the latter clauſe, *incompatible with the eſtabliſhed miniſtry?* Is it ſynonymous with the following, *ſhall be compelled to relinquiſh their benefices?* Put what interpretation upon your words you pleaſe, you will not find it eaſy to prove your point, viz. that *whenever* Miniſters of the eſtabliſhed church *hold* or *propagate* the peculiar opinions of Socinus, they are compelled to relinquiſh their benefices. In the former caſe they have only to keep their opinions to themſelves, and then they cannot be expelled for what is kept a ſecret from every one, and as to the latter, their *avowing* and *propagating* their opinions, I think you will not be able to produce perhaps one inſtance of any perſon compelled to relinquiſh his benefice even on *this* account. However till this be done my argument remains in full force, and you have failed in finding the ſmalleſt flaw in the contexture of it. I am, Rev. Sir, your friend and ſervant in Chriſt,

JOSEPH BENSON.

LETTER

LETTER II.

REV. SIR,

HAVING, in the former Letter, found fourteen pages of my Defence unexceptionable and full of "cogent and well founded reaſoning," as you have confeſſed, we paſs on to a paſſage in the 15th page, which you have much objection to, and which I ſuſpect chiefly ſtirred you up to make your animadverſions on my pamphlet. In that page I had propoſed this queſtion, "Do you ſuppoſe that an acquaintance with ancient or modern learning, that ſkill in languages, &c. can give an *ungodly man* a right to teach godlineſs?" To this queſtion I have given, as you obſerve, a flat negative, and have alſo ſubjoined, "No, not the impoſition of a Biſhop's hand neither." In this aſſertion, you ſay, I am wrong. For "a Biſhop, you affirm, *can* give an ungodly man a right to teach godlineſs." Now, Sir, either you or I are greatly miſtaken, and, it is of conſequence to know which of us it is. Obſerve, Sir, the queſtion is not, whether a Biſhop can, according to the Laws of the land, give an *ungodly man* a right to receive *Tithes* and other rewards of a public Teacher of Chriſtianity? Or whether he can authorize him to teach as a School-maſter, or private or public Lecturer on Divinity, or any other Science? But whether, according to the laws of the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, he has authority to inveſt him with the ſacred office of a *Miniſter of the Goſpel*, and ſend him into the ſheepfold as a *Paſtor* over *the flock of Chriſt?*

Now, Sir, that he has *no ſuch authority*, I am bold to ſay, I have irrefragably proved from p. 11, to the 17th, of my Letters, nay from p. 11, to

11, to the 15th, " the cogent and well founded reaſoning of which " *you yourſelf* have already acknowledged, declaring, " that it ſhall ſtand, " becauſe it is built on the rock of our Salvation " Jeſus Chriſt the righteous." All the particulars, which I have diſtinctly named, and proved from the New Teſtament to be *eſſential* to the character of a Chriſtian Miniſter, as *divine illumination*, a *birth from above*, a *conduct according to the Goſpel*, and the *preſence* and *bleſſing* of the *Lord Jeſus*, neceſſarily imply and require *godlineſs* in the very nature of them, and can have no *place whatever* in an ungodly man. What, Sir! is an ungodly man ſupernaturally enlightened and lead by the Spirit of God? Has an ungodly man learned Chriſt, in the only way in which he can be learned? Has he *put off the old man* and *put on the new*, and is he *renewed in the ſpirit of his mind?* Is *his* conduct according to the Goſpel, and is the Lord Jeſus preſent with ſuch an one? How is it then, Sir, that after you had ſeen and confeſſed " the cogency of the reaſoning " contained in theſe pages, and affirmed, " that it would ſtand, becauſe it was built upon a rock," that you yourſelf ſhould be the firſt to contradict your own aſſertions, and to try to overthrow it in the only point it goes to eſtabliſh? But, depend upon it, I ſhall not let you go thus. I ſhall bind you down to admit the concluſion, as you have already allowed the premiſes. I reduce you, therefore, to this dilemma: either own you were miſtaken, in ſaying my reaſoning was cogent, and well founded, and would ſtand, or acknowledge you were wrong in ſuppoſing that a Biſhop has a right, according to the Laws of Chriſt, to appoint an *ungodly man* to preach the Goſpel.

As

As I ſuppoſe my Letters are in the poſſeſſion of *moſt* or *all* of thoſe, into whoſe hands this will come, therefore I forbear repeating the proofs there produced. But the paſſages of Scripture I have quoted, are a *demonſtration*, that God has given no ungodly man a right to preach the Goſpel. Indeed, an ungodly man *cannot* preach it, at leaſt, not properly, for he does not *know it*. An ungodly man is a *natural* man, but a *natural man diſcerneth not the things of God*, and *cannot know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, diſcerned by the light of that Spirit which he has not. How then is it poſſible he ſhould teach them? Can he teach what he does not know? Again: to preach the Goſpel, or, as I had expreſſed it, to *teach godlineſs*, is, at leaſt, to teach the true knowledge of God. But an ungodly man, according to St. John, 1 Epiſtle ii. 3, 4, *ordained* or *unordained*, does not *know God* himſelf, and therefore cannot teach the knowledge of him to others. Nay, David's words imply, not only that he is not *authorized* to teach, but that he is expreſsly *prohibited*. *Unto the wicked, God ſaith, What haſt thou to do to declare my Statutes*, or *that thou ſhouldſt take my Covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteth my words behind thee?* Now, Sir, can the impoſition of a Biſhop's hand give a man a right to run counter to the *plain, poſitive* and *revealed* will of God? I think you will not be ſo hardy as to affirm it.

And pray Sir, what ſays St. Paul upon this ſubject? He, you know, gives Timothy and Titus directions, at large, reſpecting the characters of thoſe they were to ordain as *Elders* or *Biſhops* (I ſhall ſhew you by and by, that theſe appellations were uſed indifferently of the *ſame perſons*) does he make any exceptions in favour

of

of any that were ungodly, or authorize them to ordain any ſuch? I believe not. *A Biſhop* (ſays he, 1 Tim. iii. 2.) *muſt be blameleſs, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, not given to wine, no ſtriker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own houſe, having his children in ſubjection with all gravity; not a novice,* (νεόφυτον, a young convert) *leſt, being liſted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Moreover, he muſt have a good report of them which are without,* (muſt bear a fair, unblemiſhed character in the eye of the world,) *leſt he fall into reproach, and the ſnare of the Devil.* He gives directions exactly ſimilar to Titus, (chap. i. 5.) *For this cauſe* (ſays he) *leſt I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders* (termed alſo *Biſhops* verſe 7.) *in every city. If any be blameleſs, having faithful children, not accuſed of riot or unruly,* for a *Biſhop* (the ſame perſon termed an Elder before) *muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God; not ſelf-willed, not ſoon angry, not given to wine, no ſtriker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hoſpitality, a lover of good men, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate, holding faſt the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by ſound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainſayers.* Nay, Sir, even the *Deacons,* who were properly only *Stewards* of their temporal matters, although ſome of them preached ſtatedly, (1 Tim. iii. 8.) were to be *grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, nor greedy of filthy lucre, holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience, and they were firſt to be proved,* or admitted on trial, and then, if *found blameleſs,* were to *uſe the office of a Deacon.* And what demonſtrates ſtill more of what

immenſe

immenſe importance the Apoſtle conſidered piety and virtue, and how indiſpenſably neceſſary they were to the characters of all that miniſtered in holy things, or drew near to God, even the Deacons wives were to be *grave, ſober, and faithful in all things.* Now theſe directions he gave them (verſe 15.) that *they might know how they ought to behave themſelves in the houſe of God, which is the church of the living God.* And chap. v. 21. charges Timothy *before God, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect Angels* to *obſerve theſe things, without preferring one before another, or doing any thing by partiality*; commanding him withal, *to Lay hands ſuddenly on no man, neither* (by ſo doing, nor by ordaining the ungodly) *to be partaker of other men's ſins, but to keep himſelf pure.*

Now, Sir, ſhall your bare aſſertion that I am wrong, ſtand againſt all this complicated proof? Your *bare aſſertion* I ſay, for I muſt inſiſt that you do not offer the ſhadow of an argument. "If you had ſaid, (you proceed,) a Biſhop "could not give an ungodly man a right to "teach *ungodlineſs*, I would admit the verity of "your aſſertion, for a Biſhop has no ſuch power "committed to him." Alas! Sir, is this all? Can you allow no more? Yes, you muſt and will allow more, before I have done with you. A Biſhop, then, you think "has not a power "committed to him, to give an ungodly man a "right to teach *ungodlineſs*, but he has the "power;" (yes, Sir, I allow, if he be a *truly, Chriſtian Biſhop*, under God, he has the power) "to ſend men out to teach godlineſs." But what kind of men? To make your argument of any force you ſhould have ſaid *ungodly* men. For of this *one thing* we were ſpeaking, and this was the *ſole* matter in debate between us. But when

when it came to the point, this you were aſhamed to ſay, in expreſs words, and therefore dropping the odious Epithet, although your argument abſolutely required it to be inſerted, you ſimply ſaid, A Biſhop has power to ſend *men* out to teach godlineſs; a ſentiment I never called in queſtion. Ah! Sir, what pitiful ſhuffling is this? Notwithſtanding that, (as you tell us) you never had the advantage of an Univerſity education, and therefore probably never learned *Logic*, yet *common ſenſe* ſhould teach you not to ſhift the terms of the queſtion in this manner. You muſt give me leave to reſtore them, and then your propoſition is, "A Biſhop has a power committed to him to ſend out *ungodly men* to teach *godlineſs*." Now, Sir, I aſk how you prove this? By whom is this power committed? By *God* or the *Devil*? And where ſhall we find the charter that conveys it? Among the Records of *Heaven* or thoſe of *Hell*?

While you are conſidering of an anſwer to theſe important queſtions, I will give you an intimation of what you are not aware. In granting that a Biſhop cannot give an ungodly man a right to teach *ungodlineſs*, you in fact grant that he cannot ſend him out to teach at all, I mean as a *Miniſter of Chriſt*. For if he go out to teach at all, he will teach *ungodlineſs*, by *precept*, or *example*, or *both*. This Jeſus Chriſt himſelf has teſtified, *He that is not with me*, (ſays he) *is againſt me, and he that gathereth not with me ſcattereth*. The ſending out an *ungodly man*, as a ſhepherd of ſouls, with an injunction not to teach *ungodlineſs*, is like letting looſe a wolf among ſheep, with an injunction not to *tear* or *kill* any of them; or the ſending a man that has the plague into a populous Town, or large concourſe of people, with a command not to infect

any

any of them. Or it reſembles the appointing a perſon to mix and give out drugs, in an Apothecary's ſhop, who is an entire ſtranger to the nature and properties of them, and never learnt to diſtinguiſh medicines from poiſons, with a ſtrict order to *do good and no harm.* Or, which may come yet nearer to the point, it may be compared to the admitting a perſon, who is utterly ignorant both of diſorders and their remedies, and is himſelf ſick of an infectious diſeaſe, to practiſe as Phyſician. Having gotten his *Diploma*, he is held in reputation, and treated with reſpect. He viſits, of courſe, family after family, where ſome are *ſick* and others in *health*, gives advice and writes preſcriptions. The conſequence of this is, that if he happen by accident, to cure any of thoſe that are ſick, he kills *more* of them, while, through the contagious diſorder upon himſelf, he ſpreads infection among all that are well, and leaves contagion and death behind him in every houſe he enters. This ſhews, Sir, that ſo far from going *beyond* the truth, in the poſition with which you find fault, I hardly came up to it. So far from ſaying *too much*, I rather ſaid *too little.* I might have affirmed, not only that a Biſhop has no right to admit an *ungodly* man into the ſacred office of the Miniſtry, but that he has no right to admit an *unconverted*, *unregenerate*, or *unrenewed man.* See Matt. xviii. 3. John iii: 3—8, and Eph. iv. 21—24. But this language, however Scriptural, is now become Arabic to many profeſſors of Chriſtianity, both Clergy and Laity in this kingdom.

You are of opinion, however, that "a pru-
"dent Biſhop would not knowingly appoint a
"bad man to the ſacred office, leſt, as his life
"might give the lie to his doctrine," *might give*

the

the lie, Sir! What! is it a matter of doubt whether it would or not? If ſo, his *doctrine* muſt be as *bad* as his *life*. *A bad man*, Sir, I preſume, lives a *bad life*. *For how can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?* And if his doctrine be not *bad* too, there muſt be an inconſiſtency between them, and they muſt give the lie, the one to the other. But to let you proceed, "Leſt, as his life might give the lie to his "doctrine, it *would*" (you mean *ſhould*, but poor Priſcian, to uſe your own expreſſion, muſt have a blow by the by) "if not render all his labours "abortive, at leaſt, weaken the efficacy of moſt "of them, among thoſe that are more influenced "by example than precept." And can you tell us who are not? Has not *example* more influence than *precept* upon all? Certainly it has, Sir, and if a man were to preach like an Archangel; if he were to utter the moſt glorious truths and in the moſt eloquent manner, it would have but little effect upon thoſe that *knew him*, if his conduct were unworthy of his profeſſion. "But if he teach ſound doctrine, though he ſhould "live a lie—it will not free his hearers from "their obligations to obſerve what he inculcates." I grant, Sir, that *his breaking* the Laws of God, will not free the people, that have the misfortune to be entruſted to his care, from their obligations to *keep* thoſe Laws; even as a Wolf's tearing the ſheep, will not give the ſheep a right to tear one another, or a Phyſician's communicating *infection*, or preſcribing *poiſon*, when he ſhould adminiſter *Medicine* and tranſmit *health*, will not give his Patients authority to *infect* or *poiſon* one another.

But what has this, Sir, to do with a Biſhop's right to ordain an ungodly man for a Miniſter? Becauſe a Wolf's tearing the ſheep, gives the

ſheep no authority to tear one another; is it therefore lawful for an *Under-Shepherd*, whoſe own the ſheep are not, and who therefore has little concern for their welfare, to appoint a *Wolf* to watch over them: becauſe forſooth, he happens to be related to, or to meet with one that is *out of bread*, and promiſes to do the work for ſmall wages? And when the ſheep are *torn* or *ſcattered*, will the chief ſhepherd, when he appears, and enquires for his ſheep, admit of ſuch reaſoning as yours in excuſe? Will it ſuffice to ſay, "Lord, I was inveſted with authority by thee, to appoint thoſe I thought proper to watch over thy flock: Therefore I appointed this wolf in ſheep's cloathing, aſſuring him his buſineſs, was, not to tear and ſcatter, but only to feed and preſerve? I am ſorry the conſequences have been ſuch as one would not wiſh. I am ſorry the ſheep are torn and ſcattered: but it cannot be my fault, for I appointed a *wolf* to ſave them. It is true the wolf neglected his duty. He neither led them after him into *green paſtures*, nor conducted them to the *ſtill waters*; nay, nor did *he ſeek that which went aſtray*, unleſs it were to devour it, nor defend thoſe that remained, unleſs to deſtroy them: but (as your language is in a ſimilar caſe) "What! does the bleſſing of God among the ſheep," (viz. their ſafety, health and growth) "depend on the virtue of the ſhepherd?" Or will the iniquity of this wolf, "their Paſtor, deprive the flock of "the loving-kindneſs of the Lord? Shame on "the man that would brook an idea capable of "ſuch an interpretation! Let him bluſh that "would utter a ſentence which would admit of "ſuch an unmerciful conſtruction!" that would intimate that the flock might not be equally ſafe and happy under the care of a wolf, ſuppoſing him

him to be in ſheep's clothing, as under that of the moſt ſkilful and diligent ſhepherd! Now, Sir, if this reaſoning be extremely abſurd, then is all you ſay on this head only like *weaving the ſpider's web for clothing*, or *hatching the cockatrice' eggs* for food. *Your webs ſhall not become garments*, and *he that eateth of ſuch eggs dieth.*

But (you ſay p. 8) "you have admitted your-"ſelf that the duty of mankind is, not to be led "by the ability and integrity of their Teachers, "but to enquire if the doctrine they teach be "true; and if ſo, then to practice what, after ſuch "enquiry, they find to be right and the way of "truth." True: and what then? What do you infer from this? Becauſe mankind are not implicitly to obey their Teachers, as Dr. T—— ſeemed to inſinuate, under a notion that they are men of *ability* and *integrity*, but are to *ſearch the Scripture* and *judge for themſelves*, therefore it is lawful to appoint perſons, whoſe ſpirit and behaviour *demonſtrate* that they are *devoid* of integrity and ability, to overſee and feed the flock of Chriſt!

But you ſay p. 27. (for I wiſh to bring all you advance, without order or regularity, in different parts of your Pamphlet upon this ſubject, into one point of view) though "it cannot be "denied that perſons manifeſtly unholy offer "themſelves as candidates for Holy Orders and "are admitted thereto; yet where does the fault "lie? Neither in the Biſhop alone nor in the "ſacred body at large: but in the people." In the people, Sir? What have the people to do with it? Do they chooſe their own Miniſters, or nominate, in general, the perſons they wiſh to be ordained to ſerve them? Are they con-

ſulted? or is their conſent more or leſs aſked or expected? No: by no means. It is not difficult matter, Sir, to ſay where this fault lies. It lies 1ſt. in thoſe that ſign the Teſtimonials of ſuch Candidates, whether *Heads of houſes*, *Tutors* and *Fellows* in the Univerſity, or *Rectors*, *Vicars* and *Curates*, in other places; who ſign them, I ſay, either without being aſſured from *their own knowledge*, that theſe Candidates are pious and virtuous perſons, and perſons well qualified for the ſacred office; or more eſpecially if they have reaſon to believe, as is too often the caſe, that they are *quite the reverſe*, *profane*, *immoral* and unacquainted with thoſe great truths of the Goſpel which they undertake to teach the people. Again 2dly, the fault lies in the *Biſhops themſelves*, whenever they ordain perſons, of whoſe want of Piety and Virtue they have manifeſt *cauſe of ſuſpicion*.

But you ſay, "The Church hath provided "Laws to guard againſt ſuch evils. For each "perſon who is to be admitted a Candidate for "Holy Orders, muſt produce (excluſive of his "Teſtimonial, ſigned by three reſpectable Clergy-"men, or from his College,) a Paper called a "*Si quis*, which is to be publiſhed in his Pariſh-"Church, that if any perſons know any thing "to alledge againſt him which may diſqualify "him for that office he may not impoſe upon "his Dioceſan and ſurreptitiouſly take orders." A very good Law this indeed, Sir, but what avails it, if it be not put in execution? But you proceed, "Whenever ſuch accuſation has been "laid before a Biſhop, I challenge you or any "man to produce a ſingle inſtance, where orders "have been conferred upon that perſon without "the Allegations being proved falſe or malicious,

"or

" or till ſome time has elapſed wherein the De-
" linquent hath ſhewn evident ſigns of contrition
" by amendment of life." I preſume, Sir, ſuch allegations are ſeldom brought: For the old Proverb is too often verified, Like Prieſt, like people. The *Church-Wardens* and *pariſhioners* (if we believe you) frequently reel through the ſtreets, as well as their *Rectors*, *Vicars* and *Curates*, and of courſe will not be very forward to inform againſt thoſe that are overtaken in the ſame vices that they themſelves are addicted to.

But (p. 28.) " If any of you methodiſtical
" ſaints ſhould hear this *Si quis* publiſhed and
" know any thing of the young, (or old) man to
" juſtify an impeachment, it ſhould be your
" buſineſs as it is your duty immediately to ap-
" prize his Lordſhip, that ſcandal may not be
" brought upon the Miniſtry by the admiſſion
" of ſo improper a perſon." Hear ye Methodiſts! *Mr. Ruſſel, Curate of Perſhore, in the Dioceſe of Worceſter*, calls upon you *publicly* to inform the Biſhop, if you know any thing *immoral* or *profane*, or *contrary* to the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, in the conduct of any that offer themſelves as Candidates for Holy Orders. And he aſſures you, that " *you, as well as all others*,
" are *bound* to do this in *Foro conſcientiæ*, in
" the court of conſcience, but more particularly
" *you*, as you profeſs, ſo much more righte-
" ouſneſs than other men:" profeſſing to keep yourſelves ſober, when others get drunk, and to be *chaſte* when others are *lewd*, and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, when others, whether Prieſts or People, as Mr. Ruſſel has informed you, too often diſgrace their high and holy calling. Mr. Ruſſel, is right, my brethren, theſe informations will come beſt from *you*, as you, in general, by the

grace of God, ſtand clear of thoſe vices of which you may be called to accuſe theſe Candidates for Orders. One thing only I would adviſe you to attend to in this matter; when you inform againſt any, by all means, produce Mr. Ruſſel's *Hints to Methodiſts* and *Diſſenters*, as your motive and authority for ſo acting.

But to return. To prove that the profligacy of a Miniſter's life, will not exculpate his hearers from the neglect of any one of their duties (a point which no body denies) you have recourſe, to the 25th Article of our church, in which you think, "that doctrine is implied in ſome diſtant manner." But, Sir, this was not the point to be proved; but whether a *Biſhop*, or *any one elſe*, has authority from Chriſt to ordain an ungodly man to the work of the miniſtry. And I think you will not ſay that *this*, or any *other* Article of our Church implies this in any manner, however diſtant.

However, "Having alluded, to this Article, "you take occaſion," (no wonder, Sir, you apologize for want of connexion, for what has this to do with the proof of your point?) from thence to ſay "I hope you will excuſe "me, if I who am *Young*, do give to you, my "*Elder*, an wholeſome admonition from thence." Certainly, Sir, I hope I ſhall always be ready to hear and receive *wholeſome* admonitions. "You "have taken upon you, (you proceed) the office "of a ſpiritual Counſellor and Guide. The "right to that office I ſhall queſtion hereafter, "when I come to ſpeak of Ordination. That "being the caſe, I make a candid appeal to "yourſelf, if you would not be doing as eſſen-"tial a ſervice to the intereſts of Chriſt's king-"dom, as you do now, if, after having ſelected

"a ſuitable

" a ſuitable Text, you were to take this Article " to be illuſtrated;"—Quere, Sir, had I not better take the *Article* for the Text? I have not been accuſtomed to name a Text and then immediately to ſet myſelf to illuſtrate *another ſubject*. Beſides, I fear, it will not be eaſy to find a ſuitable Text. But, perhaps, you can help me in this caſe. You proceed, " And by the " force of your eloquence to prove to mankind " that the impiety of the Lives of their Clergy " do not in the leaſt deprive them of any benefit " to be derived from the means of grace, which " Chriſt hath promiſed them through the func- " tions of the Prieſtly Office." You mean, Sir, (for I wiſh to underſtand you right, that I may execute your orders punctually) juſt as the *negligence* of an *Hireling* that is appointed to overſee and feed the flock, or the *lazineſs* of a *dumb dog that cannot bark, that ſleeps, lies down, and loves to ſlumber*, do not IN THE LEAST deprive the ſheep of any benefit intended to be afforded them in the Paſtoral care. And juſt as the careleſſneſs of a *watch-man*, who *when he ſeeth the ſword coming, bloweth not the Trumpet and warneth not the people, but the ſword cometh and taketh them away*, does not IN THE LEAST deprive the people of the *preſervation and ſecurity* which they meant to inſure by appointing a Watchman. And juſt as the unſkilfulneſs and inattention of a Phyſician, do not IN THE LEAST deprive his patients' of any benefit to be derived from the *healing Art*, and which they would receive from the attendance of a man of judgment and experience. Or (to uſe one compariſon more) juſt as his being ſick of a contagious diſorder himſelf, and his carrying infection with him wherever he goes, will not IN THE LEAST deprive them of the little health they have

have, or impede their recovery from ſickneſs, in the courſe of his viſiting them from day to day.

Theſe, Sir, are the beſt illuſtrations of your meaning I can think of, and now, as I underſtand you better than I did at firſt, I allow, upon ſecond thoughts, that it might not be amiſs to introduce a diſcourſe of this kind, as you ſay, by a ſuitable Text: as *Addiſon*, you know, Sir, ſelected paſſages from the *Claſſics*, and prefixed them, by way of Motto to his papers in the Spectators. And without giving you the trouble of ſearching the Scriptures, which to a perſon of your gay turn of mind might not be very pleaſant work, I think I can furniſh myſelf with ſuch a Text. Three or four paſſages occur this moment to my mind, any of which, I think, might anſwer the purpoſe admirably well; eſpecially as the Text, you know, is to be a *mere Motto*, and the *Article* is the ſubject to be illuſtrated. And, Sir, if there ſhould happen to be a contradiction between the *Text* and the *Sermon*, it will not be the leſs ſuitable for that: for it will then be entirely in the modern way. Now, Sir, the paſſages of Scripture I refer to are the following. And as I am entirely indebted to you for the very *firſt idea* of ſuch an undertaking, you ſhall chuſe which of them you pleaſe. The firſt is in the 34th chap. of Ezekiel. *Thus ſaith the Lord God unto the ſhepherds; Wo be to the ſhepherds of Iſrael, that do feed themſelves! ſhould not the ſhepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, neither have ye healed that which was ſick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye ſought that which was loſt; but with force and with*

cruelty

cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were ſcattered becauſe there was no ſhepherd: and they became meat to all the beaſts of the field when they were ſcattered. And my ſheep wandered over all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was ſcattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did ſearch or ſeek after them. Or, if you ſhould prefer it, another on the ſame ſubject may be found, Zech. xi. 16, which I ſhall not quote here. Or, one might be ſelected from our Lord's remarkable diſcourſe, as recorded John the 10th; ſuppoſe verſe 1ſt. *He that entereth not in by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up another way, is a thief and a robber.* Or ver. 12. *He that is an hireling, and not the ſhepherd, whoſe own the ſheep are not, ſeeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the ſheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them and ſcattereth the ſheep. The hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an hireling, and careth not for the ſheep.*

You ſee, Sir, any of theſe Texts *prove and illuſtrate* your doctrine admirably well, and ſhew, to a demonſtration, that "the *ignorance*, *impiety* "or *indolence* of a Miniſter of the Goſpel do not "IN THE LEAST deprive his flock of the be-"nefits to be derived from the means of grace, "and the functions of the Prieſtly office!" And there is another, which, in leſs compaſs, and in a much more conciſe and clear manner, ſets forth the ſame *conſoling* doctrine, conſoling I mean, to thoſe *benevolent* Clergymen, who though they chooſe to proceed forward in the high road to Hell themſelves, yet have ſo much *good will* to their hearers that they do not wiſh *one* of them to follow them. It is the ſhort ſentence made ſo much uſe of by Dr. T——, in what you call his celebrated Sermon. *If the blind lead the blind, both of them ſhall fall into the ditch.*

As

As an illuſtration of this Text (were it not that the *Article*, and not the *Text*, is the ſubject to be illuſtrated,) one might quote ſundry paſſages, which the margins of our Bibles refer us to, as Iſaiah ix. 16. *The Leaders of this people cauſe them to err, and they that are led of them are deſtroyed.* Or Micah iii. 5. *Thus ſaith the Lord concerning the Prophets that make my people err; that bite with the teeth, and cry,* PEACE: *and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war againſt him: therefore night ſhall be unto you, that ye ſhall not have a viſion:—and the ſun ſhall go down over the Prophets, and the day ſhall be dark over them.* Jer. vi. 14. might be quoted alſo, *They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people ſlightly, ſaying,* PEACE, PEACE, *when there is no peace:* or Ezekiel iii. 17. *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael; therefore hear the word at* MY *mouth, and give them warning from* ME. *When I ſay unto the wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely die; and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to ſave his life; the ſame wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.* Theſe paſſages I mention as being ſuch as might properly enough be uſed, in *illuſtration* of the Text, were it any part of our buſineſs to illuſtrate it, as you plainly ſee, that any of them, contain *evident* proof of the doctrine, you have it ſo much at heart to eſtabliſh, viz. that "the impiety" (including the *ignorance, ſloth, negligence* and *wickedneſs*) "of a Clergyman does "not in THE LEAST deprive his hearers of any "benefit to be derived from the means of grace, "—through the functions of the Prieſtly office."

But Sir, as this would be quite a new ſubject to me, I ſhould not like to ſpeak upon it *extem-*

pore,

pore, and as I am neither accuſtomed to read written Sermons, nor to commit them to memory and repeat them; a thought ſtrikes me, that if, to excuſe you a little *toil* and *labour*, I compoſe a diſcourſe for you on this ſubject, *you*, by all means ſhould *read it*. I the rather wiſh this, becauſe if it ſhould happen to be but a poor diſcourſe, ſtill that will make no material difference, for you have aſſured us (p. 38.) "that, "for your part, you know yourſelf capable of "delivering a written diſcourſe in a manner that "ſhall both edify your hearers and impreſs them "with principles of devotion to God and love "to man." Indeed, as to *devotion to God*, we may leave *that* out: to beget *that*, you know, is to be no part of our object. Our object is, ſimply, to beget in mankind *veneration* for and *love* to *wicked Clergymen*. And upon a topic of this kind, I expect you will be exceedingly animated. Methinks I ſee you, with *ardor* in your heart and *eloquence* in your eyes, open your book and addreſs your ſilent and admiring audience on this noble and elevating ſubject. But as matters of this nature are better conceived than expreſſed, I ſhall not attempt a deſcription, either of the *wonderful Preacher*, or of the aſtoniſhing effects of his *elocution*.

Now, Sir, it is not my intention to be at the pains to compoſe you this Sermon, that it may be delivered merely in *one* congregation. I muſt requeſt that you will go through the kingdom with it; and eſpecially that you will preach it in every pariſh where there happens to be an ungodly Miniſter. How many ſuch Pariſhes there may be, I don't pretend to ſay. It was by an entire miſtake of my meaning, in my Letters, that you ſuppoſed me to aſſert there were only a *dozen* ſuch. This you will eaſily ſee, if you will

will be at the pains of reading the paſſage again (p. 56.) But be they *many* or *few*, that can make no great difference to you. Your *Rector* or *Vicar*, who poſſibly may find his own intereſt in it, will eaſily ſpare you for ſo good a work; and you, to accompliſh ſuch an end, will not think much of your labour; and if need be, many will ſubſcribe to ſupport ſo well deviſed a *miſſion*, and ſo promiſing a *Miſſionary*. And, what will be a great conſolation to you, you will not need to defile your ſacred character or office, by treading on *unconſecrated* ground. For, no doubt, a buſineſs of this kind, even the *Cathedrals* and much more the Parochial *Churches* and *Chapels* will be open to you. Or if you think that the Methodiſt Congregations particularly need ſuch advice and inſtruction, I will either engage to give them ſuch notice of your coming, that they ſhall attend upon you at the Churches as you paſs along; or, if you can condeſcend ſo far as to enter our Chapels, I will uſe my utmoſt influence with the Preachers and Truſtees, that they may be open for your reception. And I really think, Sir, as this is quite an *extraordinary* caſe, you need not fear the cenſure of your ſuperiors if you ſhould take this extraordinary ſtep. You hardly think *I* have a right to preach at all: but nevertheleſs, you ſay, "If it "be on *any occaſion* lawful for you to invade "the Prieſt's (you mean the *Miniſter's*) office, "certainly it muſt be on this:" viz. to inculcate on people that "the impiety of the lives of "the Clergy does not *in the leaſt* deprive them "of any benefits to be derived from the means "of grace, and the functions of the *Prieſtly*, "(you mean again the *miniſterial*) office." Juſt ſo, Sir, if it be on any occaſion lawful for you to enter a *Methodiſt* preaching houſe, and addreſs

a *Methodiſt*

a *Methodiſt* congregation, it muſt be on *this*, when your *profeſſed* and *ſole* deſign is to perſuade people to cleave to the church, and attend the miniſtry of ungodly Clergymen. I aſſure you, Sir, I am a well wiſher to the Church, and am ſo delighted with the idea you have ſuggeſted, and ſo charmed with the proſpect of the great ſucceſs that is to enſue from this our new ſcheme, that though this Letter is already drawn out to an inconvenient length, I cannot deny myſelf the pleaſure of adding a Paragraph or two more, with a view to give you a *ſpecimen* of the manner in which, it ſeems to me, theſe congregations of *Methodiſts* may be very *properly* and *ſucceſsfully* addreſſed on this ſubject.

After reading one of the ſuitable Texts, we ſpoke of, and obſerving as you do (p. 9.) that "the object of our Saviour's miſſion was not "only to bring glory to God, but peace on "earth, *external*, as well as *internal*," viz. between the *ſeed of the ſerpent* and that of the *woman*, thoſe *born after the fleſh* and thoſe born *after the ſpirit*, we might ſhew that "by no "means, can we forward theſe deſigns, ſo likely "as by recommending union" between light and darkneſs, good and evil, "and by perſuading men to be *of one mind*" with their blind Leaders, and "to reſort to one place for the worſhip of their Creator," without regarding whether *truth* or *error* be there preached, whether *wholeſome food* or *poiſon* be there diſpenſed; it being abſurd to ſuppoſe that the divine bleſſing of ſpiritual nouriſhment in *wiſdom* and *grace*, is confined to *food* and withheld from *poiſon*, or that the miniſter's diſpenſing *poiſon* inſtead of *food*, will IN THE LEAST deprive his hearers of the ſpiritual health and growth intended to be conveyed to their ſouls by the miniſtry of

the word. It may then be proper to endeavour (as you intimate) "to impreſs their minds with "ſentiments of the great efficacy of the labours "of theſe men (ſuch as you hereafter deſcribe "as attending the viſitations) who are duly ap-"pointed to watch over their ſouls, and for the "neglect of which they muſt give an account "(you declare) with a terrible ſentence to be "denounced againſt them at the coming of our "Lord to judgment:" I mean, Sir, thoſe *ungodly* Miniſters, commiſſioned to teach *godlineſs*, thoſe *wolves* in *ſheep's clothing*, appointed to watch over the ſheep, thoſe *hirelings*, *whoſe own the ſheep are not*, and who therefore *care not* for them, who *have not entered in by the door into the ſheep-fold*, but have *climbed up another way*, and therefore are thieves and robbers, *coming not but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy*; who feed themſelves but not the flock; who inſtead of *feeding*, *kill* with the poiſon of their falſe doctrine *thoſe* they found *fed* already, and *who eat the fat and clothe them with the wool, but who ſtrengthen not the diſeaſed, nor heal that which is ſick, nor bind up that which is broken, nor bring again that which is driven away, nor ſeek that which was loſt.*

Now, Sir, as ſoon as we find their minds impreſſed with ſentiments of the GREAT EFFICACY of the *labours of theſe men*, the next thing will be to convince them, as you ſignify p. 10. "that "the preſence and bleſſing of the Lord Jeſus "may be as abundantly felt under the miniſtry "of theſe men," being *epiſcopally* ordained and heard on *conſecrated* ground, as under that of the moſt wiſe and holy that are appointed by Elders only, and therefore are, you are ſure, "unauthorized and *ſelf-ordained*." This you know, Sir, may eaſily be done. We have only

to

to remind them of Chriſt's promiſe, *Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world*, a promiſe this, made firſt, indeed, to the *Apoſtles* and their *diſciples*, but tranſmitted by the hands of *St. Peter* and his ſucceſſors the *Biſhops of Rome*, to the Miniſters of the Proteſtant Churches, I mean only thoſe *epiſcopally* ordained, (as you have proved, Sir, with ſuch clearneſs of argument p. 29.) and now applicable to every Clergyman of the Church of England however *ungodly*. Or if we find any that are refractory and do not obey this important truth, but are diſpoſed to diſtinguiſh in this matter, and to prefer the miniſtry of a *wiſe* and *holy* man, eſpecially if of the eſtabliſhed Church, to that of one who is *ignorant* and *wicked*, we have only to demand of them, as you do in this page, how their conduct is to be reconciled with that of St. Paul? "When "a diviſion aroſe among his Chriſtian converts, "and they began to file off into ſects and par-"ties, one crying out, *I am of Paul*, another, *I* "*am of Apollos*, and another, *I am of Cephas*, "each ſuppoſing their (you ſhould ſay *his*) own "Leader to be the beſt man: he breaks forth "into this tender ſtrain of inſpired Oratory, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, &c.? "thereby teaching them that if they expected "to derive any good from the miniſtry of either "of their Teachers they muſt aſk it of God, and "not aſcribe that power to the creature which is "only due to the Creator." This argument, Sir, muſt be very convincing indeed! *Paul*, *Apollos* and *Cephas*, were all *truly pious men*, and the *ſervants of Chriſt*, and the Corinthians are cenſured by the Apoſtle for extolling *one* of them above *another*, therefore it is evident to a demonſtration that it muſt be a *great crime* to

prefer the miniſtry of a *ſervant of Chriſt*, before that of a *ſervant of the Devil!*

Having thus fully convinced their *judgments*, we may try to move their *affections*, and eſpecially that of *ſhame* and *remorſe*, ſo neceſſary in true repentance. We may therefore now properly addreſs them in the language you uſe to me in this ſame page. "Oh! how can men of "your ſpiritual knowledge imbibe or promulge "a ſentiment ſo repugnant to the whole drift "and tenure of the ſacred Oracles;" as to ſuppoſe you will be better inſtructed by the intelligent and well informed than by the ignorant, or more incited to the practice of every thing excellent and praiſe worthy, by the diſcourſe, converſation and example of the *pious and virtuous*, than by thoſe of the *vicious* and profane! "What! does the bleſſing of God among the "people depend on the virtue of the Prieſt? "Or will the iniquity of the Paſtor, (the negli-"gent ſhepherd, the careleſs hireling above "deſcribed) deprive the flock of the mercy and "loving-kindneſs of the Lord? For ſhame "friends, that you ever broached an idea, "capable of ſuch an interpretation! Bluſh, "friends, that you once uttered a ſentiment, "which would admit of ſo unmerciful a con-"ſtruction!" "Oh! if the ſpirit of humility "(p. 11.) did but actuate all thoſe who profeſs "themſelves Teachers of the Goſpel of Chriſt, "we ſhould not then find ſuch carnal ſtrife and "diviſion among us, but" *righteous* and *wicked*, *holy* and *profane*, *born after the ſpirit*, or only *after the fleſh*, being "linked together with one "common bond of amity;" and though many of us influenced by the love of the world and ſin, yet, inaſmuch as *darkneſs* has fellowſhip with *light*, *righteouſneſs* with *unrighteouſneſs*, and

Chriſt

Chriſt with *Belial*; being "impreſſed with one "univerſal love of a crucified Jeſus, we ſhould "not walk as men whoſe minds are in darkneſs "and know not the truth, but ſhould ardently "ſtrive to exceed each other in holineſs, and to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all "things! My brethren, let me adviſe you to "take the conduct of the Apoſtle (in the fore-"mentioned paſſage) as a *model* in this reſpect, "and do all you can to concur with (ungodly) "Miniſters of the eſtabliſhed Church in one "*common cauſe* (of promoting godlineſs) by *one* "*common way*"

Hoping Sir, that theſe general *out-lines* of the Sermon, ſketched chiefly by your *own pencil*, will meet with your approbation, at the ſame time that they give you ſome idea of the *perfect picture* which may be drawn when we are fully agreed upon the plan, and you have ſignified your conſent to undertake the miſſion. I break off here, and ſubſcribe myſelf, Your fellow-helper for the good of ungodly Miniſters,

JOSEPH BENSON.

LETTER III.

REV. SIR,

I FIND, in proceeding further in the peruſal of your Pamphlet, that one of the moſt ſerious charges you bring againſt the *Methodiſts* is, that they are *Schiſmatics*. "Surely, you ſay "to me, (p. 12.) you are not ſenſible that "*ſchiſm* is a crime or you would not be the "Leader of a Party (you mean, I preſume, *a* "Leader *in* a Party) who are guilty of it; guilty

" of it in a greater degree than other Sectaries." I am ſenſible, Sir, that *ſchiſm* is a crime, but not that the Methodiſts are guilty of it, even in *any* degree, much leſs that they are guilty of it, in a *greater* degree than other people. I ſhall therefore be glad to ſee how you prove your charge. This you attempt to do as follows. " You ſay, that you (the Methodiſts) cordially " approve in general even of the ſervice of our " church and much more of her doctrine." We do, Sir, and therefore attend that ſervice, moſt of us, at all opportunities, and hearken to that doctrine whenever it is preached by the Church Miniſters; only abſenting ourſelves in Town or Country, when that doctrine is openly contradicted and denied, and a doctrine diametrically oppoſite, as *Juſtification by the merit of works*, or *abſolute, unconditional Predeſtination* is inculcated, or where the officiating Miniſter is ſo notoriouſly wicked that his life is a ſcandal to his profeſſion. Well you ſay, " this being the caſe, you have no cloak for your ſin." What *ſin* do you mean, Sir? The ſin of *ſchiſm*? Yes, you ſay, " you become *ſchiſmatics* for non-eſſentials."

" Other ſectaries, you proceed, diſſent from " us on account of ſome doctrinal opinion to " which they cannot agree," or, you ſhould have added, on account of ſome ceremony, ſuch as *kneeling* at the Lord's Supper, wearing a *ſurplice*, or uſing a *form of prayer*, with which they cannot comply, " and ſo far are to be excuſed from the guilt of *ſchiſm*; but not ſo with you." No: we do not, as a body, *diſſent* from you *at all*, unleſs when you diſſent from yourſelves in *princip'e* or *practice*, denying your own doctrines or departing from your own profeſſions. Nay we ſo admire your doctrines, in particular,

and

and are ſo perſuaded of their importance to the ſalvation of mankind, that, with great expence and labour, we build *Chapels* and *Preaching-houſes* in all parts of the Britiſh dominions in Europe, and in the Weſt-Indies, as well as throughout the Northern Continent of America, for the ſole purpoſe of having them explained and enforced, at ſtated times, to and upon all that will attend, and keep many hundreds of men employed in travelling about from day to day, to propagate and ſpread the knowledge of them; meaning hereby partly to aſſiſt thoſe few pious and enlightened Clergy, that *clearly* and *faithfully* preach theſe doctrines, and partly to ſupply the lack of ſervice of the much greater number who do not. With a view to the ſame end we print and diſperſe a variety of books of all ſizes, although chiefly ſmall tracts of low price, on doctrinal, experimental and practical Chriſtianity, even *that Chriſtianity* that is held forth in the ſacred *Scriptures*, and in the *Articles*, *Homilies*, and *Service* of our own church. And as to the ceremonies above-mentioned, enjoined by the church, we are ſo far from diſapproving of *theſe*, that in moſt places where we judge it requiſite, for the ſalvation of ſouls, to have ſervice in church-hours, we uſe a form of prayer, and are found *kneeling* at the Lord's Table in the pariſh-churches, whenever the Lord's Supper is adminiſtered, throughout this kingdom and Ireland, and that in greater numbers, frequently, than other people. Nay were it not for us, it is notorious that, in many places, the communicants would be very few. And to keep as cloſe to the church, as poſſible, and to prove to all men that we object to nothing, almoſt, reſpecting it, but the *errors* and *ſins* of its corrupt members, whoſe intimacy we ſhun and from *whom alone* we ſepa-

rate,

rate; we even refuſe, in general, the earneſt requeſt of many of our people, to adminiſter to them the Lord's-Supper in our own Chapels, not as you ſuppoſe, becauſe we judge ourſelves "incompetent" for ſuch a ſervice, but becauſe we wiſh our people to attend at the eſtabliſhed church to receive it. And yet for theſe reaſons, it ſeems, we are greater ſchiſmatics than other people!

Your aſſertion, Sir, is ſuch a paradox, that I believe, I might fairly excuſe myſelf the trouble of writing, and the public of reading one word more about it. However for the conviction of thoſe *uninformed* or *prejudiced* individuals, who may ſtill be inclined to conſider us in the ſame light, I ſhall examine this matter to the bottom, and enquire what this ſin of *ſchiſm* is, which, it muſt be confeſſed, is mentioned and condemned in the New Teſtament. Now in order to this, all I have to do is to find out and fix, the ſenſe of the paſſages where it occurs. The firſt of them is 1 Cor. i. 10. *Now I beſeech you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions* (σχισματα *ſchiſms*) *among you: but that you be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.* Now, Sir, here you obſerve the being *perfectly joined together in the ſame mind* and *in the ſame judgment, ſtands oppoſed* to *Schiſms*, which, therefore, are the *not* being ſo joined. But who were they whom the Apoſtle wiſhed to be thus joined together? The *righteous* and the *wicked?* the *holy* and the profane? No, by no means, but the *Church of God at Corinth*, (verſe 2.) *the ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, thoſe *called to be ſaints, with thoſe that in every place called on the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* the *faithful in Chriſt*, to whom ſaving *grace* was

given

given (verſe 4.) and who *waited* (verſe 7.) for *the coming of our Lord*, and concerning whom the Apoſtle was *confident that Chriſt would confirm them unto the end, that they might be blameleſs in the day of Chriſt Jeſus*. Now, Sir, what has this to do with the conduct you cenſure in us? Does the Apoſtle blame theſe *ſincere* and *devout* followers of Chriſt at Corinth becauſe they *came out from among the wicked, were ſeparate, and did not touch the unclean thing?* or becauſe, *fearing the Lord*, they aſſembled upon occaſion, *to ſpeak one to another*, and receive the word of exhortation? By no means. Nothing of this kind is ſo much as hinted at. The thing that he blames in them is that they were not *united among themſelves*, or, as Dr. Whitby expreſſes it, "were not perfectly joined together "in the ſame *belief* and in the ſame kind affec- "tions, one towards another." And ſo far, Sir, as this is the caſe with the *pious* in England of whatever denomination, ſo far as they are *alienated in their affections one from another*, and *do not all ſpeak the ſame thing*, ſo far, and no further, are they *ſchiſmatics*. But to ſuppoſe they are *ſchiſmatics*, becauſe they ſeparate themſelves from the great maſs of the ungodly in this nation, who under a profeſſion of Chriſtianity practiſe every abomination, and becauſe they obey the Apoſtolic command and *forſake not the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*, is to diſcover a marvellous ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the whole nature and genius of Chriſtianity.

"Avoid *diviſions*, or *ſchiſms*, as the original "is, (ſays Henry on the paſſage) that is, all "*alienation of affection from each other*. In "the great things of religion be of a mind: but "when there is not an unity of *ſentiment*, let "there

" there be an union of *affection.*" *Factiones intelligit* (ſays Calvin, quoted by Pool, in that admirable work his Synopſis Criticorum) *exortas, non ob doctrinæ diverſitatem, ſed ob prærogativas Miniſtorum,* 'He means (by ſchiſms here) 'the factions that aroſe among them, not on account of any difference of doctrine, but on 'account of the privileges of Miniſters.' *Sed nec ea intelligit Schiſmata* (ſays Eraſmus) *quibus receditur ab unitate Eccleſiæ, ſed quaſdem velut ſectas intra eccleſiam, dum alii aliis patronis eorum que nominibus gloriantur,* 'He does not 'mean thoſe ſchiſms (as they have been called) 'whereby a departure is made from the unity 'of the church, but certain parties within the 'Church,' that is, among the *faithful*, the *truly pious*, thoſe that ſo name the name of Chriſt, as to depart from iniquity, and hereby ſhew that they, indeed, belong to him.

The meaning of the word in the next paſſage, ch. xi. 18. is exactly ſimilar. *When ye come together, in the church* (or εκκλησια, congregation) I hear that there be *diviſions* or *ſchiſms among you*, and *I partly believe it.* Now here Sir, the ſchiſms were in the *Aſſembly met together in one place.* " *Diſſenſiones*, ſays Eraſmus, *vel de* " *cibis ipſis et potibus, vel de loco recumbendi, vel de* " *tempore cœnæ incohandæ, maxime inter devites* " *et pauperes, quorum iſti ab illis contemne-* " *bantur.*" 'Differences, either concerning the 'elements of the Lord's Supper, or concerning 'the *place* of meeting, or the *time* of beginning 'the ſupper, chiefly between the rich and the 'poor, the latter of whom were deſpiſed by the 'former.' *It happened already in thoſe early times*, ſays Beza, *what in our age hath fallen out abundantly more, that what was inſtituted with a view to unite the faithful in one body, was converted into a ſtandard of diviſion.* This was undoubtedly

undoubtedly the kind of ſchiſm here meant, and of this kind of ſchiſm, very different from that you mention, I grant the Methodiſts are now in danger. They are in danger of *contending* with, and *ſeparating* from *each other* reſpecting the very thing about which the Corinthians quarelled, viz. the *Lord's Supper*, ſome of them, in order to avoid a ſeparation from the Church of England, wiſhing ſtill to reſort to the eſtabliſhed church for that divine ordinance, and others, under a notion that it is unlawful to communicate with the ungodly, as we generally muſt do, if we receive it at the church, urging that we ought to have it adminiſtered among ourſelves. But what has this to do with the Schiſm with which you charge us? "Here, ſays Whitby, the word "*ſchiſms* is uſed, not of men ſeparating from "the church, but coming together in the "church, and eating the Lord's Supper ſepa-"rately, and ſo as not to join with the whole "aſſembly in that ordinance. So the word alſo "is uſed ch. i. 10. not of a ſeparation from the "unity of the Catholic church, ſaith Eſtius, "but of *ſects* and *diviſions in* the church," or among the truly *faithful* and *pious*, none elſe being, properly ſpeaking, members of the church. "Note, ſays Henry, there may be *ſchiſm* where there is no ſeparation of communion. Perſons may come together in the ſame church and ſit down at the ſame table and yet be ſchiſmatics. Uncharitable alienation of affection, eſpecially if it grow up to *diſcord* and *feuds* and *contentions* conſtitute *ſchiſm*. Chriſtians may ſeparate from each other's communion, and yet be charitable one towards another. They may continue in the ſame communion, and yet be uncharitable. This laſt is *ſchiſm* rather than the former. And, to add one more teſtimony to the preceding, "It

"is

'is plain (ſays a late, judicious Writer,) that by '*ſchiſms* is not meant any ſeparation from the 'church, but uncharitable diviſions in it. For 'the Corinthians continued to be one church, 'and notwithſtanding all their ſtrife and con-'tention, there was no ſeparation of any one 'party from the reſt, with regard to external 'communion.'

The other paſſage 1 Cor. xii. 25. is a full confirmation of all this. *That there might be no ſchiſm in the body*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *but that the Members might have the ſame care for each other, and whether one member ſuffer, all the members might ſuffer with it, or one member be honoured all the members might rejoice with it.* Whence it appears that ſo far as this is *not* the caſe; ſo far as the Members of Chriſt's myſtical body (and by the by only the *truly pious* are members thereof) have not a *care* and *feeling* for each other, ſimilar to that which the Members of the human body have for one another, ſo far, I ſay, there is a *ſchiſm* in the body.

Now Sir, as theſe, I believe, are all the places where *Church Schiſms* are mentioned in the New Teſtament, I ſhould be glad to know how it appears that any of them fix the guilt of *ſchiſm* upon the people called Methodiſts with regard to the Church of England? To ſuppoſe, Sir, that we are *Schiſmatics* becauſe we come out from among the ungodly and meet together, as opportunity offers, is to condemn the generation of God's children in every age and nation under heaven. For in every age and nation ſince the time that the ſons of God ſeparated themſelves from the children of men and begun to call on the Lord, (Gen. iv. 26.) they that have *feared the Lord* have made it their practice to *ſpeak often one to another*, and for this purpoſe

to

to aſſemble together at proper times, and, as far as might be conſiſtent with their duty to their families, friends, and mankind in general, have ſeparated themſelves from the world, and ſhunned the Society of evil doers, knowing that evil communications, as the Proverb is, corrupt good manners.

This, Sir, was the practice of the ancient Servants of God, as appears from ſundry paſſages of the Old Teſtament, and eſpecially from Mal. iii. 16. a portion of holy writ to which I have juſt alluded. This was the practice of the Lord Jeſus, and of his firſt diſciples, and of the primitive Chriſtians in general. They did, in their day, preciſely what we do in ours. They did not withdraw themſelves entirely from the worſhip of the *Jewiſh* Temple and Synagogues. On the contrary, they aſſembled therein whenever it was convenient, as long as they were permitted. But, nevertheleſs, they ſhunned the corrupt ways and faſhions of the world, and had no further intercourſe with the wicked than their ſituation on earth rendered unavoidable, or was neceſſary in order to do their fellow creatures good. In the mean time, they forſook not the aſſembling of themſelves together, but kept ſeparate meetings from day to day, that they might converſe, pray, and break bread together; as alſo, that they might receive from the *Lord Jeſus*, his *Apoſtles*, or the firſt Chriſtian *Teachers*, that inſtruction in the great and important Truths of Chriſtianity, which they neither expected to find, nor could find in the Synagogues of the Jews. Hence it was that they were the objects of ſcorn and reproach among men, and repreſented by the wicked *Prieſts* and *Rulers*, as *Sectarians*, and thoſe that aſſociated with them as a *Sect*. (See Acts xxiv. 14. and xxviii. 22.)

22.) the reaſon of which, the Lord Jeſus did not fail, fully and frequently, to make them acquainted with. *If the world hate you*, ſays he, *ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but becauſe I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his Lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: if they have kept my ſayings, they will alſo keep yours.*

Here Sir, you have the whole origin of this dreadful charge of *Schiſm*: We ſhould not hear one word of it, if we did not moſt of us differ, as to our ſpirit and behaviour, from the generality of mankind. *If we were of the world, the world would love its own:* but if we be, as, I truſt, in general we are, the *followers of Jeſus*, it cannot love us, unleſs the word of God be of none effect. *Think not*, ſaid Jeſus, *that I am come to ſend peace on earth, I came not to ſend peace but a ſword. For I am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and a man's foes ſhall be thoſe of his own houſhold. Marvel not, my brethren*, ſaid St. John, *if the world hate you: we know that we are paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren*, meaning that they could not themſelves have loved the brethern, had they not been paſſed from death to life, and that their being paſſed from death to life was evidenced by their loving the Brethren.

From this cauſe it was, Sir, that the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes* were ſuch objects of hatred abroad, and the followers of *Wickliffe* at home, when the Reformation was beginning to dawn; and for the ſame reaſon it was that the firſt Reformers, in our own and in foreign countries, were firſt held up to view as *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics*, and then

then perſecuted, impriſoned and put to death. And it is an amazing thing to me, Sir, that you, who, among other Proteſtants, ſtand charged with this ſame ſin of *Schiſm* by the Church of Rome, ſhould have the effrontery to prefer it againſt your proteſtant Brethren, (who do not differ from you either in doctrine or modes of worſhip,) on much weaker grounds; viz. becauſe they aſſemble together, at ſtated times, to help one another by prayer, inſtruction, reproof and exhortation to make their *calling and election ſure*. This, Sir, is what the Church of Rome, corrupt as it is, would not, perhaps, now do. It would not ſtigmatize thoſe as *Schiſmatics*, who held to its *doctrines* and *forms of worſhip*, merely becauſe they reformed their lives, lived in the fear of God and uſed every means in their power to help each other to heaven.

"But you build Chapels and appoint Preachers of your own?" We do, Sir, and for the reaſons already mentioned, viz. to ſupply the lack of ſervice of the Church Clergy, many of whom either neglect to preach, or even utterly deny the doctrines of their own Church, while, as you yourſelf know and in your pamphlet confeſs, the lives of ſome of them are ſo diſtant from every thing ſacred, that great ſcandal is given by their conduct, and the religion of Jeſus is fallen into great diſrepute. "Well (you ſay) there are "laws in our land which are effectual to re-"move that grievance, if duly enforced." There are, Sir, but who are to enforce thoſe Laws? Why, you ſay, "If you Methodiſts are in reality "what you pretend to be, firm believers in "Chriſt's Goſpel and anxious for the ſalvation "of ſouls, no conſideration of human fear, no "worldly motives will prevent you from ſeeing "that ſuch wholeſome laws are duly executed."

We muſt have more wealth, and be higher in office, Sir, than moſt of us are at preſent, before any thing of this kind, humanly ſpeaking, will be in our power. For *while the Prophets prophecy falſely, and the Prieſts bear rule by their means, the people love to have it ſo.* But "by this reſolute conduct" (that is by lodging informations and proſecuting Clergymen in the Spiritual Court) "you would become the light "of the world, and public bleſſings in thoſe "places where you may dwell." It would be in a new way then, a way in which neither our Lord nor his Apoſtles nor his followers in any age have ſet us an example. And, ſure I am, inſtead of *public bleſſings*, we ſhould be deemed by the generality, *public curſes* and the peſts of ſociety. But if you are quite of opinion that *ſuits at Law*, ſuits in the moſt intricate, expenſive and tedious of all Courts, in *Spiritual Courts*, will do more to reform the world than the publication of *the goſpel of the grace of God*, and will *yourſelf* ſet us the example in getting theſe laws, you ſpeak of, executed, I will not affirm but we may do ſomething, by way of imitation of you. You cannot be at a loſs to know ſuch Clergymen. You have been preſent, it ſeems, at the Viſitations, where "the Clergy "(you aſſure us p. 14.) meet to ſtare at and "compliment each other in the habiliments of "their order, to hear a controverſial ſermon "which is not long remembered, to liſten to a "wholeſome charge that is too ſeldom obſerved "in practice, and afterwards to eat and drink, "ſo much, perhaps, beyond the bounds of tem-"perance, that they cannot with any decency, or "propriety, rebuke their *church-wardens*, or "*pariſhioners*, for *reeling* about the ſtreets, leſt "the rebuke ſhould be too juſtly retorted upon "them:

" them : THOU THAT PREACHEST TO " OTHERS AND ART THYSELF A CAST " AWAY !"

Now, Sir, if this be a juſt deſcription (and certainly you would not exaggerate here !) of the Clergy of your own Arch-deaconry, you will not I preſume, have far to go, to find theſe objects of your charitable labours. You may meet with them, no doubt, on all ſides of you, and you muſt be better acquainted with the various forms of *ſpiritual Law* than we are, and muſt have more intereſt with thoſe that ſit at the head of that department, and to whom it belongs to puniſh offenders. You therefore have every advantage to make a ſucceſsful beginning. And for your encouragement, Sir, remember your own words. " By thus enforc- " ing Church diſcipline, the morals, both of " Prieſts and People would be happily improved, " the face of our land would be changed from " impiety to holineſs, and we ſhould be turned " from the power of Satan to God. Your " viſitations would then be attended to, on the " excellent principles of their inſtitution, and " primitive uſuage, and no longer remain" (what you have juſt confeſſed they now are) " little " better than meetings pro forma, or for eating and " drinking far beyond the bounds of temper- " ance."

In the mean time, till this new plan has been tried and proved to be ſucceſsful, " thoſe *godly* " perſons (as you, in deriſion, term them) of " this nation denominated Methodiſts," muſt ſtill keep up, what you call their " conventicle aſſociations," which they have found by experience to be productive of ſpiritual good to myriads. And, to ſupply the lack of ſervice of ſuch gluttonous men and wine-bibbers as you

have juſt deſcribed, whom they cannot, with you, view, as "duly appointed" to miniſter in holy things, nor think it ſafe to truſt to as "ſpiritual guides," they muſt ſtill encourage, and aſſemble to hear thoſe Teachers, of their own choice, by whom, under God, they were *called out of darkneſs into light*, and whoſe miniſtry they have long found to be *the power of God unto ſalvation*. Here, I muſt break off, for the preſent, being called to more important work. Leaving you, therefore, ſeriouſly to conſider of the beſt way to proſecute your own plan, and "ſee that the coercive Laws of the Church "be carried into execution againſt the diſobe-"dient and refractory" (as you expreſs yourſelf p. 14.) of the Clergy, in the ſeveral pariſhes, at leaſt, of your Arch-deaconry, where according to your own account a reformation is ſo much wanted, I now, ſubſcribe myſelf, your well-wiſher in Chriſt,

JOSEPH BENSON.

Sat. evening 6 o'clock, Aug. 31. 1793.

LETTER IV.

REV. SIR,

YOUR "Eye-lids were diſpoſed to ſlumber," as you have told us, (p. 15.) and you were off your guard, when you drew towards the concluſion of your former Letter, or you would hardly have been ſo communicative to me and the public, as you then were. You have given me information of what I neither knew nor ſuſpected before. That there were ſome ungodly men, here and there, in holy Orders, that would eat

eat and drink to excefs, I had reafon to believe. But that the corruption of the Clergy was fo great and general as you repreſent, I did not imagine. Although I muſt not contradict you leſt unpleaſant conſequences ſhould follow; yet for the credit of *Chriſtianity* and of the *eſtabliſhed Church*, I hope your colouring is *too ſtrong*, or, at leaſt, that however it may be in your neighbourhood, matters are not in quite ſo bad a ſituation in all other parts of the Kingdom. Be this as it will, I really think you deſerve, and, I dare ſay, at the next Viſitation, will meet with, a ſevere reprimand (if you have not met with one already) from your ſuperiours, for expoſing in this manner the nakedneſs of your Mother and Brethren. You pretend to find fault with me, Sir, and the Methodiſts for " meddling with the Clergy." But when have we done any thing like this? When have we repreſented the Clergy in general, for you make no exceptions, " as eating and drinking ſo far beyond the bounds of temperance " even at the Viſitations, as not to be able with decency to reprove their drunken *church-wardens* and *pariſhioners?* And this is not the only place in which you turn your arms againſt your brethren the Clergy. Even in the Note (p. 48.) in which you call out for an advance of your wages, you are ſo imprudent, as to fall foul upon thoſe, on whom your advancement depends, " For their accumulated " pluralities and non-reſidence, ſpending, you " ſay, moſt of their time, not amongſt their " Pariſhioners, but at ſome places of idle amuſe- " ment, while their flocks are left to the care " of hirelings ill-requited for their labours." I imagine you are right, Sir, in fearing you have ſpoken theſe things " at the hazard of your own welfare." Dr. T——, the Heads of houſes and Dignitaries

Dignitaries of the Church, I conjecture, will not thank you for your interference in this matter, nor be "in any great haſte" (as a friend of mine expreſſes it) "to get the Epiſcopal Croſier "conferred on one who makes ſuch an indiſ-"crimate uſe of his Curatical ſtaff, fuſtigating "his friends, as well as his enemies, and dealing "his unmerciful blows around him with ſuch "force as to make *Arch-deacons*, *Rectors*, *Vicars* "and *Curates* reel through the ſtreets like a "company of drunken Bacchanalians."

Non tali auxilio, nec defenſoribus iſtis
Tempus eget.

But to return. Let any one compare what I was compelled, in our own juſtification, to advance in my Letters reſpecting the manner in which the Clergy are uſually bred and educated for the miniſtry, with the above named particulars which you, a ſon of the Church, and acquainted with all the ſecrets of the family, have told out to the world, and then ſay which of us have reviled the Clergy? When I aſſerted (p. 18. of my Letters 1ſt, Edit.) that "it is not our cuſtom to meddle with the Clergy," I meant preciſely what I ſaid, and ſaid only what is *true*. It is not our cuſtom, Sir, and you have not offered the ſhadow of a proof that it is, to meddle with them, or to take any notice, of them at all, unleſs at all opportunities to attend their miniſtrations. We ſimply and quietly go on our own way, without troubling ourſelves with others. "But this declaration, you ſay, "ſeems to you rather vague in it's meaning, "and, in whatever ſenſe you take it, it is, you "affirm, *not founded in truth*." This, Sir, methinks looks like giving *me the lie?* and what you ſay in the preceding ſentence, where you charge

charge me with advancing "*traſh* and *falſehood*," ſeems to wear the ſame aſpect. I fear, Sir, you will ſometimes take thoſe liberties with others which you will not ſuffer others to uſe with you.

But how do you make it appear that I aſſert *traſh* and *falſehood*, when I affirm that "it is not our cuſtom to meddle with the Clergy?" Why, you ſay "that you do meddle with thoſe "duties which belong to the Prieſtly office, I "have before proved." I believe, Sir, you have before proved *nothing*, that needed any proof. Did it need any proof, that we frequently expound the word of God to and enforce it upon thoſe that attend our miniſtry? that we reprove ſin and call ſinners to repentance? that we viſit the ſick and pray with and for our hearers? Now theſe are all duties belonging to what you term the *prieſtly* office. But why do we meddle with theſe? Why? Truly becauſe they are *neceſſary*, *abſolutely* neceſſary to be done by ſome, and the Clergy in many places cannot or will not do them. To inſtance in one of thoſe duties, Sir, and a very principle one, viz. *Reproving ſin*, whether in private or in public, ſuppoſe, the ſin of *drunkenneſs*. According to the confeſſion you yourſelf have juſt made, many of the Clergy *cannot* do this duty. "They cannot, you ſay, with any decency or "propriety, rebuke their *church-wardens* or "pariſhioners for reeling about the ſtreets, leſt "the rebuke ſhould be too juſtly retorted upon "themſelves." Now, Sir, thank God, we neither fear nor have cauſe to fear leſt any ſhould retort upon us in this matter. We are enabled, by his grace, to keep ourſelves ſober. But pray, Sir, how is this "meddling with the "Clergy?" Were we to do as you adviſe, were

we to lodge informations againſt all, of the ſacred office, that walk diſorderly, as, by your account, we ſhould have work enough, ſo this would be meddling with them with a vengeance.

But you go on, "If you mean by not med-" dling with the Clergy, that it is not your " cuſtom to revile them, that aſſertion is no leſs " falſe than the other." And are *you* the perſon, Sir, that raiſes ſo great an outcry about giving people the lie? Then, I may ſay to you, in the language of St. Paul, *Wherein thou judgeſt another thou condemneſt thyſelf: for thou thyſelf that judgeſt doeſt the ſame things.* But how do you make it appear that my aſſertion is falſe? Why, you ſay "Whenever I have known the " Methodiſts gain a new footing in any place " and enter with a view of Proſelytiſm, (ſay Sir, with a view to call ſinners to repentance) " or when a freſh Preacher has come among a " Society of them previouſly formed, the gene- " ral ſubject of the primary harangue has been a " declaration of their own pious intentions, and " an affectionate lamentation for the general " darkneſs of mankind in ſpiritual knowledge, " and therefore that they are come among them " to enlighten them, to take off the film which " the Devil has put upon them, which is the " reaſon why they have ſo long groped about in " the darkneſs of ungodlineſs, but that the hea- " venly powder which they will blow into their " eyes, will remove this film, and they will ſee " clearly the things which belong to their peace." Now, Sir, all this you peremptorily aſſert, and that, as you would have us believe, upon your own knowledge. "Whenever I have known " the Methodiſts gain a new footing in any " place; or when a freſh Preacher has come " among a Society previouſly formed." Pray,

Sir,

Sir, in how many places have *you known* the Methodiſts to gain a new footing, and how many of their Preachers have *you* ſat under on theſe occaſions, and *when* and *where* have *you* heard any of them expreſs themſelves in ſuch elegant language as you here give us? Till you inform us of theſe things, and ſpecify both *time* and *place*, we will take the liberty of ſuſpending our belief of the truth of this extraordinary ſtory. In the mean time, Sir, be aſſured that all who know the Methodiſts have, in this one inſtance, proof ſufficient that little dependance is to be placed, on the truth of your aſſertions, which however peremptory, are as ridiculous as they are unfounded.

But ſtill I aſk, how is this "reviling the Clergy?" Why, you ſay, "as the bulk of mankind, though not learned, are nevertheleſs "capable of reaſoning by inference—they infer "from ſuch declarations," that is from declarations *never made*, "that, though the Clergy "are ſet apart, and what is more, paid to inſtruct them in theſe eſſential branches of knowledge, yet that they are either blind watchmen "and ignorant, or elſe that they are dumb dogs "that cannot bark, or lazy, lying down and "loving to ſlumber, and only looking to their "gain." And pray, Sir, what inference, then, do you think they will draw from the information you have given them, reſpecting the behaviour of the Clergy at the Viſitations? I fear they will infer from this, that you broke off your quotation from the Prophet too ſoon, and that you ought to have added, "*Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough:—They are Shepherds that cannot underſtand. Come ye, ſay they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourſelves with ſtrong drink, and to morrow ſhall be as this day*

day, and much more abundant. To uſe your own words, "What you may judge of ſuch "conduct, I know not, but in my opinion "this is meddling with the Clergy with a ven-"geance:" and, however undeſigned by you, I conjecture that it will greatly tend "to augment the adherents to Methodiſm."

It certainly, Sir, was a moſt true and ingenuous confeſſion with which you begun this 2d. Letter, viz. "that your head was not clear, and "that you were not capable of reaſoning with "cogency." I am amazed, Sir, if you judged it to be your duty to refute what you call my "*traſh* and *falſehood*," that you ſhould ſuppoſe "it would be an offence to the Deity to pray "to him for ſupernatural illumination and a "ſpirit of diſcernment," ſince it is manifeſt, that, contrary to the high opinion you have of yourſelf, "your natural faculties are not ſuffici-"ent for the purpoſe." If ever you ſhould take up the pen again, eſpecially on any controverſial ſubject, I would adviſe you, not to be afraid nor aſhamed to pray for divine illumination and a ſpirit of diſcernment, for I am ſure you have need of a greater degree thereof than you now poſſeſs. And I would adviſe you too, to ſpend a little more time than you ſeem to have done, in the cultivation of your parts. You know the more barren the ſoil is, the greater need there is to beſtow culture upon it. You ought at leaſt, Sir, to underſtand *Grammar*, or not pretend to become an Author. If a perſon that ſpeaks extempore ſhould ſometimes "give Priſcian reaſon to com-plain of a broken head, (as you think ſome of the Methodiſt Preachers do) it is a *pardonable* fault; but for a Clergyman of the eſtabliſhed Church to ſit down in his Study and compoſe a book for the public inſpection, and make ſuch

maſſacre

maſſacre of his native language as you do, is indeed inexcuſable. There is ſcarce a concord or rule of government in the Engliſh Language that you have not broken. *Participles*, *Adverbs* and *Adjectives*, you knock down in ranks, and ſin againſt the whole group of *Moods* and *Tenſes*. Certainly Sir, till by ſome future publication you give us proof that you have cultivated and improved your underſtanding more than you yet appear to have done, you muſt not pretend to be any judge in Literature.

I believe you, when you ſay that you conſider us as a people who "have only ſmall pretenſions to learning," and that, you ſuppoſe, "we "can boaſt of but very few converts, who are "far emerged from ignorance." For I preſume, it was your perſuaſion of this which inſpired you with courage to attack us. But let me tell you, Sir, if I had taken no notice of your weak and juvenile production, you would not have eſcaped without proper animadverſion. We have in our Connexion many hundreds, not to ſay thouſands, well able to cope with *you*, and expoſe the weakneſs of your argumentation. And as to our Societies in general, though compoſed chiefly of the labouring or lower ranks of mankind, yet they are abundantly *wiſer* and more *knowing* than when they firſt heard us or became Members of our Societies; and I may ſay, too, in *divine things*, at leaſt, much wiſer than moſt of their neighbours in ſimilar circumſtances. And they have, at leaſt, the *fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wiſdom, and depart from evil, which is underſtanding*, an attainment, which, if we believe the information you have given us, too many Clergy even of the eſtabliſhed Church have not arrived at. When any ſuch as theſe, I mean ſuch as you have deſcribed as aſſembling at the Viſitations,

are inveſted with the ſacred office, then indeed, whatever "modern Jeroboam" (as you expreſs it) in the Bench of Biſhops might have conferred ſuch a dignity upon them, "are Prieſts of the "high places made of the loweſt of the people." For as ſin, of any kind, is the greateſt degradation of a man or angel, ſo of all ſins *drunkenneſs* ſinks a man the loweſt.

I am glad to find you acknowledging (p. 19.) "that a man who underſtands only that one "tongue in which he is to ſpeak, if he be "well acquainted with the Scripture, is better "qualified for the Paſtoral office, than the man "who is a *Linguiſt*, *Philoſopher* and *Logician*, "but ignorant of the grand doctrines of Chriſ-"tianity." And I think you will allow too, that a man that is truly *pious* and *virtuous*, is in that reſpect, at leaſt, better qualified for and more ſurely called of God to the Paſtoral office, than one that is *vicious* and *profane*. Now, Sir, it is on this ground chiefly that I conſider many of thoſe, the validity of whoſe ordination you queſtion, as being better *qualified for* and more ſurely *called of God to* the Paſtoral office than many Clergymen of the Church of England. They give more manifeſt proofs of their *piety* and of their *acquaintance* with the Oracles of God. You, Sir, are a Clergyman; and I preſume have no doubt of your being lawfully inveſted with the Paſtoral office. But give me leave to ſay, I much doubt whether you have been yet called of God to it. For, on the one hand, you give us great reaſon to ſuſpect your piety, and on the other, your knowledge of the Scriptures. The 2d. and 6th. pages of your pamphlet give us no very favourable idea of your *gravity and meekneſs of wiſdom*, while the high conceit you have of your own "natural faculties," and your ſuppoſing "it would be an

"offence

" offence to the Deity to pray to him for ſu-
" pernatural illumination and a ſpirit of diſcern-
" ment," when diſcuſſing ſubjects of ſuch great moment, make us doubt whether you have yet attained any meaſure of that *ſelf-knowledge* and *faith towards God*, without which piety is but a name.

But independent of this, you betray great ignorance of thoſe divine Oracles you undertake to explain, and of that evangelical diſpenſation, of which you profeſs to be a Miniſter. To inſtance in two very important points. You every where write as though there were, ſtrictly ſpeaking, *Prieſts* under the *New-Teſtament* diſpenſation, and the Miniſters of the Goſpel were thoſe *prieſts*. Hence you carry us back to the *Levitical Prieſt-hood* (p. 21. and 22.) that we may learn from thence how men are to be *called to* and *inveſted with* the ſacred office of *feeding* and *overſeeing* the flock of Chriſt; and even refer us to the 7th Chapter of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews for a confirmation of your ſentiments on this head. Now Sir, you might, with full as much propriety, have referred us to the firſt Chapter of Geneſis. The 7th. Chapter of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews ſays not one word about the ſubject to which you ſuppoſe it refers: it relates to the *prieſthood of Chriſt* and that *only*. And let me tell you, Sir, a truth, and a moſt important truth, of which, nevertheleſs, you ſeem to be entirely ignorant. Under the Chriſtian diſpenſation there is *no Prieſt* but *Chriſt*, and it is of his Prieſthood *only* that that of Aaron was typical. I challenge you, Sir, or any man to produce *one ſingle text*, out of the New Teſtament, which gives *any*, the *leaſt* hint that the Miniſters of the Goſpel, ſtrictly ſpeaking, are to be conſidered as *Prieſts*. They are every where ſpoken of under another character, viz.

as *Miniſters of Chriſt* and *Stewards of the myſteries of God*, appointed, not to make atonement for the ſins of the people (which was the office of the Prieſts,) but to inſtruct, rebuke, exhort and watch over them in love as thoſe that muſt give an account. So that your whole argument from the Lævitical prieſthood falls to the ground, as an imaginary fabric, erected without a foundation. Another inſtance of your marvellous want of acquaintance with the Scriptures, is your every where taking it for granted that, in the Epiſtles of St. Paul, and the other Apoſtles, *Biſhops* are repreſented as an Order above *Elders*, and indeed the *higheſt* Order in the Church. "*Timothy* and *Titus*, you ſay, p. 24, "were both of them Biſhops, the one over the "Church at Epheſus and the other over that at "Crete. By virtue of their office as being of "the higheſt ſacerdotal dignity, they were au-"thorized to ſend out other Labourers for the "Chriſtian harveſt: but we have no proof that "this power was communicated by either of them, "or any other Biſhop indiſcriminately, to thoſe "Elders whom they ordained, but was a pri-"vilege confined ſolely to each Biſhop in his "own province, till he went the way of all "fleſh—and then one of the Elders, no doubt, "was elected in his place, and thus a regular "and duly authorized Prieſthood, has been con-"tinued down to the preſent day."

Now, Sir, in all this, you talk without book. You ſpeak entirely of your own head, and that not only *without* any countenance from Scripture, but in expreſs contradiction to repeated teſtimonies of it, and to the judgment of "the "firſt Engliſh Reformers, who according to "Moſheim, admitted but two Orders of Church "officers to be of *divine appointment*, viz. "*Biſhops* and *Deacons*; a Preſbyter and a Biſhop,

"according

" according to them, being but two names for " the ſame office." This indeed is evident to a demonſtration from ſundry paſſages of the New Teſtament, two or three of which I ſhall here adduce. In the 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apoſtles, where we have an account of St. Paul's ſolemn charge delivered to the *Elders* of the Church of Epheſus, met together at *Miletus*, we find him denominating them all, without exception, *Overſeers* or *Biſhops*, (επισκοπους) and affirming that *the Holy Ghoſt had made them ſuch over his flock*. And it appears from Acts xiv. 23. that they were ſuch as they ordained in every Church. Nor was there any other order of men employed as *Paſtors*, under the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, than this, in the *firſt churches*, unleſs we except the *Deacons*, who were properly no more than *Stewards*, entruſted with the management of their temporal matters, and certainly did not preach by virtue of that office. This appears evident from Phil. i. 1. where we read, *Paul and Timotheus, the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, to all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus which are at Philippi, with the Biſhops and Deacons*. Here Sir, the Church at Philippi is repreſented as comprizing only the *ſaints*, that is, the believers in general, and the *Biſhops* and *Deacons*. Now if there were another order, as you ſuppoſe, diſtinct from both, viz. that of *Elders* who were not Biſhops, how happens it that no notice is taken of it? That there was no ſuch thing in the Apoſtolic Churches, is further manifeſt from the 1 Epiſtle of Peter chap. v. 1, 2. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort*, ſays Peter, *who alſo am an Elder; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight thereof*, επισκοπουντες, literally *diſcharging the office of Biſhops*, or *Overſeers*. This is ſtill further certain from that paſſage of the Epiſtle to Titus

already quoted. " *For this cauſe left I thee in Crete that thou ſhouldſt——ordain Elders in every city. If any be blameleſs, &c. for a Biſhop muſt be blameleſs, &c.* Here, Sir, you ſee again that the terms *Elder and Biſhop were uſed by the Apoſtles indifferently.*

In this point, therefore, you ſhew that you are but little acquainted with the Scriptures. And as to " *Timothy* and *Titus* being both of " them *Biſhops*, the one over the Church of " Epheſus and the other over that of Crete," where do you find this appellation given them in the New Teſtament, unleſs in Notes ſubjoined to the latter Epiſtle to Timothy and that to Titus, which, you know are of no authority. It is certain they did not ſtatedly reſide in thoſe places. They were only ſent to them for a time with a view to make certain regulations in the Churches. They were rather *Evangeliſts* than *Biſhops*, an order in that age which you overlook, but which is particularly mentioned Eph. iv. 11. Theſe were *Itinerants*, and travelled to and fro, at the command and under the direction of the Apoſtles, partly with a view to *plant* Churches, and partly to *water* thoſe already planted, as alſo to make ſuch regulations as the Apoſtles thought neceſſary or proper to be made. And you ſeem entirely to have forgot, what cuts your whole doctrine up by the roots, that the former of theſe perſons, Timothy (and if *he* why not *Titus* alſo?) was ordained by thoſe very *Elders*, who, you are very confident, were of an order quite inferior and never ordained any. *Neglect not*, ſays St. Paul, 1 Tim. iv. 14.) *the gift that is in thee* (τυ εν σοι χαρισματος, the gift of *grace*, meaning, undoubtedly, either the *office itſelf* to which he was graciouſly called, or *his qualification for it*) which was given thee by prophecy,

ptophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Preſbytery. Theſe Preſbyters or Elders, therefore, ordained Timothy, who ordained other *Elders* or *Biſhops*!

But what are we to infer from all this? Why, that *Ordination* with them was a very different thing from what it is with you. It was, as I ſaid in my Letters, neither more nor leſs than "the ſetting apart of perſons, properly called "and qualified, for the purpoſe of *overſeeing* and "*feeding* the flock of Chriſt." And it mattered little, nay nothing, by whom this was done, whether by an *Apoſtle*, *Evangeliſt*, or *Elder*, if it were but done by thoſe that were *proper judges*, were the true Servants of Chriſt and already in the ſame Miniſtry, having been formerly ſet apart for the ſame office by others. And this point, Sir, I am ready to diſpute with you whenever you pleaſe.

What therefore renders any man's Ordination not *valid*, or, which is the ſame, *null*, and *void* is 1ſt. and principally his not being *properly qualified*, either through want of *piety*, *knowledge* or other neceſſary miniſterial *gifts* for the office. 2dly, His not being properly *called*. I chiefly mean *of God*, by what the Church of England terms the *motion*, or influence of the *Holy Ghoſt*. And 3dly, his not being properly *ſet apart* for the work; the perſons, who take this upon them; either not being proper judges what qualifications are neceſſary, or not being already in the ſame office. Now, Sir, it is on the *firſt* and *ſecond* of theſe accounts, that I object to the *validity* of *your* Ordination. It appears to me, that you are not properly *qualified* for, nor *called* to it, as being ſadly wanting both in piety and knowledge.

St. Paul,

St. Paul, in giving directions to Timothy, reſpecting this matter, expreſsly prohibits him from ordaining a *Striker*, and you, by your own confeſſion, are ſuch. He requires alſo, as we ſaw above, that the perſon ſhould be *blameleſs, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, not covetous, not a brawler, but patient, and not a novice*, νεόφυτον, *a young convert, leſt* (ſays he) *being puffed up* (with a notion of his own great abilities) *he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.* Now, Sir, how far you anſwer this character your friends and neighbours know better than I. Only this I will ſay, the things you have advanced and the manner in which you have expreſſed yourſelf, in this your firſt publication, have made me ſtrongly ſuſpect, that you are, I will not ſay a *novice* or young convert, but no ſcriptural convert at all, I mean not *born from above*, not *created anew in Chriſt Jeſus*. But be this as it will, I have plainly manifeſted that you are unacquainted with the Scriptures, in ſome very capital points, and this, of itſelf, is a ſufficient proof of your want of ability for your office. Now if you be not *qualified*, you cannot be *called*. God never *moves* any man to take upon him this ſacred office that is not qualified for it. For he cannot contradict himſelf, and firſt prohibit a man from an office, by withholding the proper qualifications, and then call him to it. So that you may amuſe and divert yourſelf as you pleaſe, Sir, with queſtioning the validity of the ordinations of the *Methodiſt Preachers*, and what is yet more ſtrange and ridiculous, thoſe of the various bodies of *Diſſenters* in this Kingdom, and of the Reformed Churches, in *Scotland*, in *Holland*, in *America*, and divers other parts of the earth:

but

but it would better become you to reflect upon yourself and ask your own heart whether you spoke *the truth*, when you solemnly affirmed before the Bishop, that you "*trusted you were* "*moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you that* "*office and ministry?*"

And, now, Sir, I would here drop the subject of Ordination entirely, as having said sufficient upon it perfectly to overthrow your baseless fabric, were it not that a few of your *Hints*, as you call them, are so extremely singular and extraordinary, not to say ridiculous, that they deserve to be dragged into a further light, than that in which they stand in your Pamphlet, that they may meet with that contempt which they merit. I had said in my Letters, what, not partiality to the Dissenters, but *reason* and *truth* extorted from me, "that the ordinations of the "various bodies of Dissenters, in this kingdom, "are as solemn in themselves and as effectual "to every purpose of sacred service in the "church of Christ, as those of the Ministers "that are episcopally ordained." On this you observe, "That they may be performed with as "much solemnity and decency I do not deny: "but that is but the ceremonial part of the "business: the important point is how far "they are conformable to the Scriptures, and if "they are authorized to use such ceremonials." Sir, I spoke not of the *ceremonial part* of the business *at all:* but *wholly* of the *spirit* and *nature* of it. I spoke only of "*setting apart*, for "the purpose of *overseeing* and *feeding* the flock "of Christ, persons *properly qualified* and *called*, "by such as are *proper judges* and are themselves in the Ministry." Now, Sir, do you call *this* the ceremonial part of the business? The ceremonial part of the business, is, whether the

the perſon, that performs the office of *ordaining*, have the name of a *Biſhop*, and appears in, what you call "mitred ſupremacy," and "lawn-ſleeves," or whether he be ſimply termed an *Elder*, *Paſtor*, *Miniſter* or *Preacher*, and be habited in a *black-gown*, a *White-Surplice*, or merely in a *plain coat* of black, brown, or any other colour. This, Sir, according to *Scripture*, reaſon, common ſenſe, and the uſuage of the primitive church, is the ceremonial part of the buſineſs, and of *no kind* of conſequence *whatever*.

And there is another thing too, which, though generally uſed by the Apoſtles, Evangeliſts and Paſtors of the firſt churches, yet muſt be ranked under the ſame head, and that is *the impoſition of hands*. Even this, Sir, is not *eſſential* to the ordination or appointment of *Paſtors* to watch over the flock of Chriſt. Paul and Barnabas had preached long before they received that ceremony at all, as appears from divers parts of the Acts of the Apoſtles, eſpecially from chap. xiii. 1—3. And many others, ſuch as *Stephen*, *Philip*, *Silas*, and *Apollos*, probably never had it, I mean for the purpoſe of ſetting them apart to preach the Goſpel, otherwiſe I know the two former, among divers others who never preached, were appointed to a temporal office, viz. that of *Deacons*, or *Stewards*, by impoſition of hands. But you, Sir, overlooking what is eſſential in this work, the ſetting apart for it perſons *properly qualified* and *called*, dwell altogether on what is circumſtantial, and if the perſon *ordained* be ever ſo *ignorant* and *wicked*, and if the perſon *ordaining* be *ignorant* and *wicked* too, if he be no judge of the qualifications requiſite in a Candidate, nor be able to diſtinguiſh a *ſheep* of Chriſt from a *goat*; if he be neither *called of God*

God to, nor *countenanced in* ſuch an office; yet it is with *you* a proper ordination if it be performed by one that has obtained "mitred ſupremacy" and wears "lawn ſleeves." Nay you aſſure us "your opinion is, that thoſe Orders "given by a *Roman Catholic Biſhop*, are equally "valid with thoſe that are given by a *Proteſtant* "Biſhop," as being, what you call *Epiſcopal*, although the Church of Rome is repreſented in Scripture as the MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH, and an *Apoſtate* from the true faith of Chriſt and pure worſhip of God. (See Rev. xiii. and 17. and 2 Theſſ. ii. 3.) But, to uſe your own language (p. 26.) "*A turbid fountain cannot ſend forth limpid waters.*

In the mean time, you "flatly deny the ſuf-"ficiency of Orders confered by Diſſenters of "every denomination," and that for this curious reaſon: "None of the inſtitutors of ſects, you "ſay, had attained Epiſcopal dignity." Thus with one ſtroke of your pen, you unchriſtian all the Churches of the *Proteſtant Diſſenters* in England and Ireland, the Churches of Scotland and the *Reformed* Churches abroad, whether in Holland, Switzerland, or America. But, Sir, I have ſhewn you that whoever has attained the *dignity* (to uſe your own expreſſion,) of a *Preſbyter* or *Elder*, has alſo obtained that of an *Overſeer* or *Biſhop*, of the flock of Chriſt, and diſprove it, if you can. Therefore although "James Arminius and others of the ſame party "never arrived to mitred ſupremacy," and although "John Weſley never attained lawn ſleeves," as you expreſs yourſelf, yet they might be endued with as much authority, from God, to appoint perſons to go forth and call ſinners to repentance, as the Mitred Biſhops that ordained you,

you, and ſuch gentlemen as you have deſcribed page the 14th of your Pamphlet, and as much fruit may have ariſen or may ariſe from the labours of the former as of the latter. What fruit there may be of your labours, and of the labours of ſuch *reeling* brethren, I cannot ſay. How many loſt ſinners you have been inſtrumental in bringing to repentance is beſt known, I will not ſay to *yourſelves*, (for I fear you make little enquiry about it) but to *God*. But one thing I know. The good done by the Preachers ſent out by Mr. Weſley is ſo apparent and undeniable, that *you yourſelf*, an enemy as you confeſſedly are, cannot help acknowledging it.

" Before I conclude, (you ſay p. 44.) I muſt " pay that tribute of approbation to the Methodiſts" (whom p. 26, and 27. you had termed a deluded people) " to which I really think they " are entitled and, that is, that they certainly " have been inſtrumental to produce a reforma- " tion in the morals of many profligate characters " (particularly in populous neighbourhoods) by " giving them a knowledge of thoſe ſcriptural " truths, of which they had otherwiſe remained " ignorant; and ſo far it muſt be confeſſed they " have improved the face of Society." Thank you, Sir. This abundantly outweighs all you have ſaid againſt us. This ſhews, that whatever you may think of our *miſſion*, it has the approbation and ſeal of heaven. It is true, this is a ſmall, a very ſmall part of the truth: but, let it be obſerved, it is the confeſſion of an *enemy*, an *acknowledged enemy*, and a confeſſion, which, though he was reluctant to give it, notorious facts extorted from him. It therefore goes a *great way*, and muſt be conſidered as an important teſtimony to, at leaſt, a part of the truth,

and

and a teſtimony that is a ſufficient confutation of your whole Pamphlet.

Of this you were apprehenſive, and therefore entered a *caveat* againſt it. "It may be repreſented to mankind you ſay, (ibid.) that if this "be admitted by the enemies of Methodiſm, it "is a tacit, however unwilling, acknowledgment "that the Methodiſtic Teachers are not only "uſeful, but neceſſary and commendable. But "this I deny: and, in ſupport of my opinion "beg leave to refer theſe *ſelf-ordained*, theological Inſtructors to the conſideration of theſe "few words in the 1ſt. verſe of the 2d. (you "mean the 6th.) chapter of St. Paul's Epiſtle to "the Romans. *Shall we continue in ſin that "grace may abound.*" Your argument runs thus. "The Methodiſts have certainly been "inſtrumental in producing a reformation in "many profligate characters by giving them a "knowledge of thoſe ſcriptural truths of which "they had otherwiſe remained ignorant:" therefore I pay them that tribute of approbation to which they are entitled. But St. Paul ſays, *Shall we continue in ſin that grace may abound?* therefore I deny that they are either neceſſary or commendable. I really think, Sir, if you proceed a little further, I ſhall have *another* reaſon to give why you want the qualifications neceſſary for a miniſter of the Goſpel, and therefore were never called of God to that office. I fear you will prove yourſelf wanting in *common ſenſe*.

Your manner of arguing reminds me of the obſervation made by a gentleman, the other day, upon peruſing your Pamphlet. "Mr. Ruſſel, "ſaid he, puts me in mind of Aſael purſuing "Abner. His heels are better than his head." As I did not recollect the ſtory to which he referred, I had the curioſity to turn to it in the

2d. chapter of the 2d. Book of Samuel v. 19, 23. and muſt requeſt you to do the ſame. I hope it will be a caution to you not to undertake hereafter what is above your ſtrength. However be not over much afraid. I will ſhew you more mercy than Abner ſhewed that inconſiderate and imprudent youth. I will not kill you quite: at leaſt not at *this time*. But if your raſhneſs and miſtaken zeal carry you much further, I will not be anſwerable for the conſequences. Therefore take warning in time. The advice of Horace in this caſe is excellent and well worthy your attention.

Sumite materiam, veſtris, qui ſcribitis æquam,
Viribus: & verſate diu, quid ferre recuſent
Quid valeant humeri: cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deſeret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.

But to return, as ſome of my readers may ſuppoſe that I deal unfairly with you, and that you never could be ſo unwiſe as to argue from Rom. vi. 1. againſt its being right and commendable for the Methodiſt-Preachers to go on "reforming profligate characters and contributing to "improve the face of Society," which you confeſs they have been inſtrumental in doing; I will ſuffer you to explain yourſelf a little further, and unfold ſtill more your great ſkill in the art of reaſoning. The ſenſe you put upon St. Paul's words is new and ſingular. "No "man, you ſay, ſhould continue *in the ſin of* "*Schiſm*, or of unlawfully aſſuming the paſtoral "office, merely that the *grace* of ſpiritual "knowledge may be diffuſed by him among "the people." For "With whatever ardent "zeal ſome men may pretend to a regard for "the everlaſting welfare of their fellow-creatures, "you think, no perſon, who is in his right ſenſes,

"would

" would *enſure*, or even *hazard* his own dam-
" nation, on purpoſe to be conducive to the
" ſalvation of others." I wonder, Sir, you did not rather quote Rom. iii. 8. where the Apoſtle denies the lawfulneſs of *doing evil* that *good may come*, and affirms that the damnation of thoſe, that hold ſuch a doctrine, is juſt. I fear your *Hints* will not ſee a 2d. Edition, otherwiſe I would adviſe you to ſubſtitute *this text* inſtead of the other, as being abundantly more to your purpoſe.

But let me aſk you, Sir, where you learned that a man might " enſure or even hazard ſo
" tremendous a fate, as his own damnation, by
" being conducive to the ſalvation of others." It is quite a new doctrine to me. I have always been taught to believe that there was more danger of enſuring this tremendous fate by *neglecting* and *obſtructing*, than by *attending to* and *promoting* the ſalvation of others. And I have always thought too, that it was lawful for any one, that, through the divine bleſſing, might be able to accompliſh it, to turn another from the error of his ways, even as any one that is able, is at liberty to preſerve life or reſcue perſons from drowning. But you, in effect, ſay ' if the people are ſo mad ' that they will drown themſelves, let them. It ' is their own fault.' Your words, immediately following the above curious quotation from Rom. vi. 1. (p. 45.) are, " Though the zeal of
" ſome of the eſtabliſhed Miniſters, who are
" placed in populous pariſhes; *may not* have
" penetrated into thoſe remote corners, where
" the Methodiſts have found a way, yet the Paſ-
" tors of the eſtabliſhment are not the only per-
" ſons to be blamed on this account. The people
" themſelves are in the fault. They need not
" *periſh through lack of knowledge*, but if they

" will ſeek for the knowledge of their duty, " they have means put into their power to attain " it." This, Sir, is exactly as if you had ſaid, 'Though the diligence of ſome of the Phyſicians, 'who are placed in populous Towns, may not 'lead them to penetrate into thoſe remote cor-'ners, where the members and friends of the '*Humane Society* are reſcuing many of his Ma-'jeſty's ſubjects from drowning, yet the Gentle-'men of the Faculty are not the only perſons to 'be blamed on this account. The people them-'ſelves are in the fault. They need not periſh 'by water. If they will but keep at a diſtance 'and not *fall* or *throw themſelves* in, they will 'be ſufficiently ſafe.'

You go on, " They have throughout the king-" dom a regular miniſtry of the word preached, " and under that they may profit, if they have a " diſpoſition to encreaſe in holineſs." But, in the mean time, Sir, what are they to do, who happen to be ſituated in pariſhes where there are ſuch miniſters as you have deſcribed p. 14? And what muſt become of them who have *not* ſuch a diſpoſition, a diſpoſition, which, if *man's heart be evil from his youth up*, ſee Gen. vi. 5. and viii. 21. I may venture to ſay *none* have without ſupernatural grace? What muſt become of them? You tell us. " If they have not (that " diſpoſition) but are determined to continue in " ignorance, and follow the ways of ſin" (in which, by the by, their *Shepherds* go before them) " their deſtruction is of themſelves, and through " their own perverſeneſs," or the ignorance, ſloth or bad example, ſay, of thoſe appointed to lead and watch over them, " they muſt periſh accordingly." In other words, *The blind lead the blind, and they together fall into the ditch*, and in the ditch let them lie and periſh together rather

rather than that theſe *ſelf-ordained* theological Inſtructors, ſhould continue to commit the ſin of *Schiſm*, either by helping them out or uſing any means to prevent their falling in! You will remember, however, that you have not yet proved "the reforming profligate characters," or in St. James's more juſt and ſignificant language, the *converting a ſinner from the error of his ways* to be *ſchiſm* or *hereſy*.

Ah! Sir, how different is the ſpirit manifeſted in the above paſſages from that of him, whoſe ſervant and follower you profeſs to be! Who *laid down his life for the* ſheep, and who, as the Evangeliſts often inform us, *had compaſſion on the multitudes, becauſe they fainted and were ſcattered abroad as ſheep that had no ſhepherd!* I am diſpoſed to ſpare you or I could here find an argument much more forcible than any I mentioned before, why you never ought to have been made a *Shepherd of ſouls*. You want *compaſſion for* and *love to them*; and but too manifeſtly ſhew the *wiſdom* and *propriety* of our Lord's obſervation, that the *Hireling careth not for the ſheep*. Leaving you to reflect, Sir, upon the inconſiſtency of your reaſoning and the impropriety of your conduct, I again ſubſcribe myſelf, Rev. Sir, your well-wither in Chriſt,

JOSEPH BENSON.

LETTER V.

REV. SIR,

ALTHOUGH I have already anſwered every thing in your Remarks that deſerves notice, and that much more at large than I at firſt intended, and therefore might well be excuſed, if

I here put a period to my reply; yet, as you have thrown out divers unkind hints, which however improbable and groundleſs, may be improved, if ſuffered to paſs unnoticed, by our enemies, to the prejudice of that bleſſed work of reformation, which, you yourſelf have been conſtrained to acknowledge, the Methodiſts have been inſtrumental in effecting in this land, I ſhall therefore ſpend a few more pages in refuting the moſt material of them.

" The next object of my inveſtigation, you " obſerve, p. 29. is your *Loyalty* and profeſſions " of attachment to the Government. That you " are either averſe to kingly government in " general, (as ſome of the Diſſenters are well " known to be) or have any perſonal antipathy " to our preſent moſt gracious Sovereign, in " particular, is what I dare not aſſert; and for " ought I know to the contrary you may be firm " friends to the form of government now " eſtabliſhed in this kingdom, as you profeſs." Why then, in the name of reaſon and religion, do you throw out inſinuations to the contrary? Where is the love that ὁ λογιζεται κακον *that thinketh*, ſuſpecteth, or inferreth *no evil*, where none appears? But " Certainly, you ſay, you give " ſome room to queſtion your attachment." What, Sir, although " for *ought you know to the* " *contrary* we may be firm friends to the Govern- " ment?" This is one of your many inconſiſtences.

But proceed and tell us what room we have given to queſtion our attachment to the Government? " You inform us, you ſay, that one of " the Minutes of your Conference, laſt year, " was that none of you ſhould, either in writing " or converſation ſpeak lightly or irreverently " of the Government under which he lives."

And

And pray, Sir, how does this prove that "we "have given room to queſtion our attachment?" I ſuppoſed, eſpecially, as it was a public Act, done, in effect, by our *whole body*, it fully proved the *reverſe* of what you inſinuate, and left *no room* for ſuſpicion *whatever*. But you ſay, "There is a kind of *Jeſuitical* reſerve in a *word* "of this ſentence." I will venture to ſay, Sir, that you are the firſt perſon who found this out: and it is an invention worthy of your "ſpruce "head." "What do you mean (you go on) by "the word *Government?*" We mean, Sir, what every body elſe means by it; *The higher, or ruling, civil Powers* in this or any other nation where divine Providence may have caſt our lot. As to *this* kingdom, we mean the *form of Government eſtabliſhed amongſt us*, conſiſting of *King, Lords*, and *Commons*.

But you ſay p. 30. "if you include every "branch of it, I think you need not be told that "the Clergy have been deemed in every wiſe "Legiſlature as the *firſt* and *moſt important* "branch that ſhoots from this trunk." From what trunk, Sir, the trunk of Government? Of this you were ſpeaking, and of this it is moſt natural to underſtand you, your meaning therefore is 'The Government, conſiſting of *King, Lords* 'and *Commons* is a Trunk out of which grow 'divers branches. The *firſt* and moſt important 'of theſe branches is *the Clergy*.' It appears by this, Sir, that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the *Clergy* are not a part of what you call "the trunk of Go-"vernment," but only a branch growing therefrom? Or, if you ſpeak more at large, and fix no particular idea to the word *trunk*, but conſider the Government, as conſiſting of *three* grand branches, united, ſome way, in one root, then you affirm, 1ſt, that the Clergy are the *firſt* and

moſt

moſt important branch of the government, and 2dly, that they have been deemed ſuch in every wiſe legiſlature. Now, Sir, if this latter be your meaning, then I muſt utterly deny both parts of your propoſition. The Clergy are not "the "*firſt* and *moſt important* branch of the Civil "Government, eſtabliſhed in this kingdom;" but the *King* is that branch: and I deny 2dly, that they are "deemed ſuch by every wiſe legi-"ſlature," unleſs you can prove that *ours* is a fooliſh one. If the former be your meaning, if the Clergy be but a *branch*, growing from the trunk of Government, then, for any thing that you advance to the contrary, that trunk might remain *entire* even ſuppoſing that this branch ſhould prove ſo *rotten* as *all*, or *ſome part* of it, to fall off. Perhaps there might be virtue enough in the *ſtock* to emit *other* and more *ſound* branches.

But proceed, Sir, in your argument, and ſhew that we have given room to queſtion our attachment to Government. "If you have not prattled "againſt us, (you ſay) with malicious words "have you not written againſt us? Have you "not lifted up the ſlanderous weapon to wound "this important branch?" viz. the *Clergy*. The *ſlanderous weapon?* No Sir, I defy *you* or any man to ſhew that I have ſaid a ſyllable *more* than is true. I knew, Sir, that the Biſhops ſit in the *Houſe of Lords*, and that, in conjunction with the *Peers* of the Realm, they are one of the *three* branches of Government; but I never knew nor heard before that the *Arch-deacons*, *Deacons*, *Rectors*, *Vicars and Curates*, and among the reſt, the *Curate of Perſhore* were all branches of the Legiſlature, and Government of this Land, and that for any man to intimate, that ſome are admitted into and continued in *their* Order,

Order, who are not ſo *holy* as the ſacred office requires, is to write againſt the Government and "lift up a ſlanderous weapon to wound a "branch" of it. I fear, Sir, as being you think the *firſt* and *moſt* important branch of the Government, you want to enjoy a privilege which, none of the other branches enjoy or wiſh for, and that is, the privilege of *diſgracing* your profeſſion by an *ungodly* and *wicked life*, and yet that your characters ſhould be accounted ſo ſacred that no man ſhall be permitted to inſinuate that you do evil. And, no wonder, for, by your own confeſſion, you have your Orders from *Rome*, where the Clergy have long been accounted *inviolable*.

But, Sir, I can eaſily ſettle this point with *you*. When you have ſhewn us that your informing the nation that at the *Viſitations* "the "Clergy eat and drink ſo far beyond the bounds "of temperance, that they cannot with any *de*-"*cency* or *propriety* rebuke their Church-War-"dens and Pariſhioners for reeling about the "ſtreets, leſt the rebuke ſhould be too juſtly "retorted upon themſelves," is not writing againſt the *Government*, then will I alſo, in my turn, ſhew you how nothing I have advanced can be conſtrued in that light. But "in plain "terms you ſay (p. 31.) have you not vilified "and traduced a reſpectable body of men?" No, Sir, not at all. Some of them, if we believe *you*, traduce and vilify themſelves and that to ſuch a degree that they are aſhamed to do one of the moſt important parts of their duty; they are aſhamed to reprove their drunken *Church Wardens* and *Pariſhioners*; but I have not traduced and vilified them. But have you not repreſented them to the world, as a "claſs the great "majority of whom do not feel inwardly that

"love

" love for a crucified Saviour which the Society " of Methodiſts do find working in their hearts." This, Sir, is your *own* elegant language: it is not *mine*, as may eaſily be ſeen by turning to the 44th page of my Letters, 1ſt. Edition, to which you refer us for a proof of the truth of your obſervation. And is this, Sir, the beſt proof you can produce of my vilifying and traducing the Clergy? Then how innocent am I in compariſon of *you*? eſpecially conſidering the honourable teſtimony I repeatedly bear to the *knowledge*, *piety* and *virtue* of many in different parts of the kingdom!

But " you accuſe the doctor with exciting a Mob," accuſe him *with* exciting! Poor Priſcian! how this " modern young Cleric " breaks thy Head again! I preſume, Sir, you mean " I ac- " cuſe him of exciting a Mob." Certainly, Sir, the mob roſe in conſequence of his preaching his Sermon in ſeveral of the Churches of Oxford. And let him deny it who can. But " certainly, " you ſay, you ſometimes throw off the ſanctity " of your character, or you would never utter " expreſſions which a drunken Bargeman would " not have the audacity to aſſert." Sanctity of character, as you expreſs it, however it may be with *you*, is not with me an endowment which can be *put off* and *on*, at pleaſure. " He (you are ſure) would not have called the Clergy (you mean the *drunken Clergy*) Servants of the Devil." Perhaps not: in calling *them* ſo, he would have called *himſelf* ſo. But where have I called the Clergy *Servants of the Devil*? Certainly not in p. the 26th, to which you refer, nor in any other part of my Book. But you ſay, " if not in ex- " preſs words yet certainly by implication." Nay, Sir, if *this* be all, then you are as deep in the mud, as the Proverb is, as I am in the mire.

For

For if *he that committeth ſin be of the Devil*, as St. John teſtifies, and if, *his ſervants we be whom we obey*, as St. Paul declares, and *thoſe be of their Father the Devil who do his works*, as Jeſus Chriſt bears witneſs, then whoſe ſervants have *you* called them, who have placed them before our eyes, high and low, young and old, one with another, as reeling through the ſtreets among their drunken *Church-Wardens* and *Pariſhioners*? and whoſe ſervant have you repreſented *yourſelf* to be where you declare you will knock a man down that gives you the *lie*? Not the ſervant of *him*, I preſume, who ſays, *If any man ſmite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other alſo.*

But I object (you ſay) to that dictatorial ſpirit which inſtead of modeſtly ſtating your opinion, aſſumes the imperious language of the unſubdued mind that is fond of power, and ſays, "Go from "place to place and preach as they do." I am not afraid, Sir, leſt any unprejudiced perſon, who is at all acquainted with the various figures of ſpeech, and who reads thoſe and ſuch like expreſſions in connection with the context, ſhould ſuppoſe they proceeded from a *dictatorial Spirit*. Indeed I was not *dictating* at all. I was only putting Dr. T——, you and other enemies of the Methodiſts into a way to effect, what you have ſo much at heart, viz. to ſtop their further progreſs. If you would do this, I ſay, *Go forth and preach as they do.* But "I here, you ſay, "expreſs my abhorrence both of the *manner and* "*matter* of this ſentence," a ſentence, however, which, both as to the *manner and matter* of it, is cloſely connected with, and indeed makes a part of "the very excellent Counſel," as you term it, which a little after (p. 35.) you ſay, I have "given the Clergy for enabling them to the "effectual diſcharge of that vocation, whereunto

"they

" they are called." Here, however, you expreſs your abhorrence both of the matter and manner of it! And why? I fear, becauſe it comes too cloſe to your heart, and reproaches you for your *indolence* and *ſloth* in the ſacred work of ſaving ſouls.

You go on (p. 33.) " Itinerant Preaching is " neither requiſite nor proper, in any country " where Chriſtianity is the eſtabliſhed Religion." You mean, I preſume, Sir, *where people are Chriſtians by an act of the Legiſlature!* But where is that country? In what quarter of the globe does it lie? Is it in the *torrid*, in the *frigid*, or in one of the *temperate* Zones? Where is the place where *repentance*, *faith*, and *holineſs*, the *mind of Chriſt* and *image of God*, in other words, *Chriſtianity*, is eſtabliſhed by the Government, and people *univerſally* or *generally* love God and their neighbours, and *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called*, by virtue of Acts of Parliament? Ah, Sir, here you manifeſt that you have read my Letters, and what is more, have read the *Liturgy*, *Articles* and *Homilies* of our Church, nay and even the *Scriptures* to little purpoſe. You know not yet what Chriſtianity is! You have not yet learned that *if any man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt he is none of his. Chriſtianity the eſtabliſhed religion!* Alas, Sir, it is yet but poorly eſtabliſhed, if we believe the account you have given of the conduct of its prime Miniſters, even when they aſſemble together to conſult about its intereſts!

You go on, " It may indeed be both neceſſary " and expedient in thoſe parts of the Globe " which be in darkneſs, and where we wiſh to " diſſeminate the ſeeds of the Goſpel." Then, Sir, it is neceſſary in *England*, which, according to what you, yourſelf, have more than once confeſſed,

ſelfiſh, lies in darkneſs, if *ſin* or *ignorance* be darkneſs. "But, you proceed, where the foſ-"tering hand of power hath cheriſhed its "growth, till its branches cover the land;" that is, till *wiſdom, piety and virtue*; till *faith, hope, love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs and temperance*; till *holineſs and happineſs* cover the land: "there "it does not want the care and ſkill of the itine-"rant huſbandman." True, Sir, but where is that happy nation? Pray do you know a *City, Town, Pariſh* or even *Village* in the Kingdom where this is the caſe? If you do and will point it out, I will allow that "the regular Servants "of the Vineyard" (as you term the Clergy of the eſtabliſhed Church) "may be ſufficient to "manage and culture the Vine," in that place. But obſerve they muſt not be ſuch as you have deſcribed, p. 14. who eat and drink with the drunken and reel through the ſtreets like Bacchanalians. Theſe, Sir, are not the "regular "ſervants of the Vineyard," but very *irregular* ones, who have not entered in at the right door, but have climbed over the wall, (I mean who have entered into the ſacred office without Chriſt's permiſſion or authority) not with a view to "culture the Vine," but to eat the *grapes* and drink themſelves drunk with the *wine*.

I am glad, Sir, that you are obliged to confeſs that "the mode of conveying the knowledge "of Chriſt by itinerant Preaching is in confor-"mity to the practice of the Apoſtolic Teachers, "who went about preaching the Goſpel from "city to city,—confirming the ſouls of the diſ-"ciples and exhorting them to continue in the "faith, Acts xiv. 22." By this you ſee, Sir, that they travelled from place to place, not only to ſow the *firſt ſeeds* of Goſpel truth, and *plant*

the vine of Chriſtianity, but alſo to *water* what was planted. " But (p. 84.) if this preaching " from place to place had been an eſſential part " of the Goſpel miniſtry." Did I ſay it was? Certainly I did not. Many things may be *expedient and uſeful*, which are not *eſſential*, or abſolutely neceſſary. (You go on) " and to con- " tinue throughout all ages, it is unaccountable " to me that almoſt all thoſe pious and learned " men who *have* lived (you ſhould ſay, who " *lived*) during the laſt 15 or 16 Centuries, " ſhould never have been of that opinion and " acted (you mean again, *nor* have acted) ac- " cordingly." To ſay nothing of the ancient Fathers, many in Europe, ſince the light of the Reformation dawned, *did* travel from *place* to *place*, yea from *country* to *country*, to diffuſe the knowledge of Chriſt crucified. I only mentioned one of the moſt eminent of theſe, viz. Mr. Barnard Gilpin, in my Letters to Dr. T; but divers others of the Reformers, both at home and abroad might be named as examples, more or leſs remarkable, of the ſame kind.

Nay, even among the Members of the Church of Rome, itinerant preaching is encouraged and frequently practiſed in foreign parts. Mr. Fletcher mentions *one* inſtance of this kind in a Letter dated Nyon, Sept. 25. 1778. and addreſſed to James Ireland, Eſq; (See Poſthumous pieces of the late Rev. Mr. Fletcher, publiſhed by the Rev. Melvill Horne, p. 226.) " Paſſing through a part of the vale (ſays he) which belongs to the King of France, I ſaw a prodigious concourſe of people, and ſuppoſed they kept a fair, but was agreeably ſurprized to find it was three Miſſionaries who went about, as itinerant preachers, to help the regular Clergy. They had been there already ſome days, and were three

three brothers who preached morning and evening. The evening ſervice opened by what they call a *Conference*. One of the Miſſionaries took the pulpit, and the Pariſh Prieſt propoſed queſtions to him, which he anſwered at full length and in a very edifying manner.—The method was admirably well calculated to draw and fix the attention of a mixed multitude. This conference being ended, another Miſſionary took the pulpit. His text was our Lord's deſcription of the day of judgment. Before the ſermon, all thoſe who, for the preſs, could kneel, did, and ſung a French Hymn to beg a bleſſing upon the word; and indeed it was bleſſed. An awful attention was viſible upon moſt, and for a good part of the diſcourſe, the voice of the Preacher was almoſt loſt in the cries and bitter wailings of the audience. I have ſeen but once or twice congregations as much affected in England."

You ſee by this quotation, Sir, from one of his Letters, that Mr. Fletcher was no enemy to *field* or *itinerant Preaching*. You however, unhappily for your cauſe, have thought proper to produce him as ſuch. "Beyond all doubt, you "ſay, many have been as well qualified for "ſuch labours, as *John Weſley*, or any of his "Society. Of many inſtances that might be "enumerated, I ſhall adduce only one, of a "modern date, and that was the truly pious "John Fletcher of Madeley in Shropſhire." The moſt improper choice you could have made. Mr. Fletcher preached in private houſes in all parts of his own and neighbouring Pariſhes, where he could gain acceſs; received the Methodiſt Preachers to lodge and preach in his houſe regularly once a fortnight or oftener; built a *Preaching-houſe*, to be occupied by himſelf and them conjointly, in *Madeley-wood*, and

preached in the private houſes and Chapels of the Methodiſts throughout the kingdom, wherever he came, and that during the whole time that intervened between his firſt taking orders and his death. Nay, and what is more, kept private meetings for chriſtian converſation and prayer, and formed Societies preciſely as we do.

I preſume, Sir, had you known this before, you would have been more ſparing in your commendations of this man of God. "The memo-"ry, you aſſure us, of his virtues is now deeply "engraven on the hearts of many of his Pariſh-"ioners, and the conſolation of his doctrine "many have already experienced in their dying "hours." All this is true, Sir, and abundantly more than you, probably, ever heard concerning him, or would believe if related by ever ſuch credible witneſſes: notwithſtanding that "you verily believe, you ſay, that more ſincere "and genuine piety circulated through the "leaſt of his fingers, though he died young, "than ever flow'd through Mr. Weſley's heart, "during a life of upwards of fourſcore years." How far your faith in this inſtance may be built on a ſolid baſis I am not ſure. For how much genuine piety might circulate through the leaſt of Mr. Fletcher's fingers, during his comparatively ſhort life, and how much through Mr. Weſley's heart during his life of 89 years, I cannot ſo much as conjecture, having no certain principles to proceed upon. I can only ſay that, from my long acquaintance with Mr. Fletcher, and the many moſt *kind* and *reſpectful* things he was continually dropping from his lips and from his pen, reſpecting Mr. Weſley, I am ſatisfied he would not have thanked you for making the compariſon.

If

If you wiſh to know his ſentiments of Mr. Weſley, after a moſt intimate acquaintance with him for many years, read his *Checks to Antinomianiſm*. As you may not be able to get a ſight of them ſoon, I will tranſcribe two Paragraphs from the firſt of them, termed *The Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Weſley's Minutes of the year* 1770. After aſſuring us p. 9. that "for above 16 years "(and this was written in 1770) he had heard "him frequently in his (Mr. Weſley's) chapels "and ſometimes in his own Church, (at Madeley) "and familiarly converſed and correſponded "with him, and often peruſed his numerous "works in proſe and verſe;" in p. 96. he ſpeaks as follows. "One word about Mr. Weſley and "I have done. Of the two greateſt, and moſt "uſeful miniſters I ever knew, one is no more. "(Mr. Whitfield.) The other, after amazing "labours, flies ſtill with unwearied diligence "through the three kingdoms, calling ſinners "to repentance, and to the healing fountain "of Jeſus' blood. Though oppreſſed with the "weight of near 70 years, and the care of near "*thirty thouſand ſouls*, he ſhames ſtill, by his "unabated zeal and immenſe labours, all the "young miniſters in England, perhaps in "Chriſtendom. He has generally blown the "goſpel-trump and rode 20 miles before moſt "of the Profeſſors, who deſpiſe his labours, "have left their downy pillows. As he begins "the day, the week, the year, ſo he concludes "them, ſtill intent upon extenſive ſervices for "the glory of the Redeemer and the good of "ſouls. And ſhall we lightly lift up our pens, "our tongues, our hands againſt him? No, let "them rather forget their cunning. If we will "quarrel, can we find no body to fall out with,

" but the Miniſter upon whom God puts the
" greateſt honour ?"

" Our Elijah (i. e. Mr. Whitfield) has lately
" been tranſlated to heaven. Grey headed
" Eliſha is yet awhile continued upon earth.
" And ſhall we make a hurry and noiſe to bring
" in railing accuſations againſt him with more
" ſucceſs ? while we pretend to a peculiar zeal
" for Chriſt's glory, ſhall the very ſame ſpirit be
" found in us which made his perſecutors ſay,
" *He hath ſpoken blaſphemy*, (or hereſy) *what*
" *need we any farther witneſſes* ? Shall the ſons
" of the prophets, ſhall even children in grace
" and knowledge, openly traduce the venerable
" ſeer and his abundant labours ? When they
" ſee him run upon his Lord's errands, ſhall they
" cry, not, *Go up, thou bald head*, but, *Go up*
" *thou heretic* ? O Jeſus of Nazareth, thou re-
" jected of men, thou who waſt once called a
" deceiver of the people, ſuffer it not ; leſt the
" raging bear of perſecution come ſuddenly out
" of the wood upon thoſe ſons of diſcord, and
" tear them in pieces !"

Such is the opinion, which Mr. Fletcher, whom you ſeem ſo much to admire, had of him whom you revile as an *Enthuſiaſt*, a perſon of *an haughty ſpirit*, and a *dealer in old women's tales* (p. 34.) And I preſume, Sir, Mr. Fletcher was as good a judge of *men* and *manners* as you are, and a little better acquainted with the *venerable perſon*, whom you, a bold youth of yeſterday, of little learning, and, I fear, of leſs religion, go out of your way to make a blow at, becauſe, forſooth, he is now dead, and you think you can abuſe him with ſafety. But, Sir, Mr. Weſley had friends that loved him, and a ſufficient number of them remain alive to chaſtiſe ſuch inſolence as yours. But to return. " He (you ſay,

" Mr.

" Mr. Fletcher) inſtead of being impelled by
" the ambitious hopes of being a Leader of a nu-
" merous Sect, or prompted by wild enthuſiaſtic
" notions of becoming a general Reformer,
" thought he ſhould be fulfilling his duty in as
" acceptable a manner to God, by a regular,
" conſcientious and zealous regard to the diſ-
" charge of his obligations, as a *Pariſh Prieſt*,
" as if he compaſſed ſea and land to make pro-
" ſelytes."

Mr. Fletcher, Sir, was as zealous, to the full, to make proſelytes, as Mr. Weſley, and proſelytes of *exactly the ſame kind*, and to the *ſame cauſe*, proſelytes from *ſin* to *righteouſneſs*, and from *Belial* to *Chriſt*, and to accompliſh this deſirable end, left no means, whatever, untried. He, in a ſenſe, compaſſed ſea and land; not confining himſelf even to this Kingdom, or to the Britiſh dominions, but uſing all his endeavours to ſpread the Redeemer's intereſt in France, in Switzerland, and other parts of Europe. And if you diſcharge your duty, as a *Pariſh Prieſt*, (to uſe your own unſcriptural expreſſion) I will not ſay as he did, for that I am ſure is not to be expected from you, but in any way that bears the leaſt reſemblance, however diſtant, to the manner in which he diſcharged his, as you will be highly approved of by the Methodiſts, ſo you will not long eſcape being ſtigmatized as one yourſelf, and even as an *itinerant Preacher*. And as you have read, you ſay, the *Portrait of St. Paul*, and it appears it has made ſo much impreſſion upon you, as to raiſe in your mind an high eſteem for its Author, and as by reading my Letters, you have conceived a great deſire " to partake of my likeneſs," I am not without hopes, (for nothing is impoſſible with God: he is well able to open the eyes of the blind,

blind, and cauſe the heart of the raſh to underſtand knowledge,) but we ſhall ſee *your* name upon the liſt of Methodiſt, itinerant Preachers, by and by.

I am the more encouraged to hope for this, as I find, in reading a little further, you highly approve of the advice I ventured to give thoſe Clergy who wiſh to put a ſtop to the further progreſs of Methodiſm, the ſubſtance of which advice was, that they ſhould imitate the Methodiſt Preachers in their *preaching* and *labours*. To this advice, however you have one objection. "From your words, (you ſay, p. 36.) not "a doubt remains, that you mean the diſcourſe "ſhould be delivered extempore. Here I differ "with you, though very probably, at firſt ſight, "many of my readers may be of your opinion. "For a man to be thoroughly qualified for an "extempore Orator, in matters of theology, "requires gifts and endowments that fall to the "ſhare of but very few." True, and therefore, however certain it is that preaching extempore is the moſt excellent way for thoſe that are qualified for it, I by no means adviſe *you* to attempt it, being "well convinced," as you yourſelf are, "that you would only advance a "*Jumble of Crudities*." "You might indeed, "you think, (p. 39.) be able to find words "enough to keep your tongue in action, but "then you fear" (and no doubt you have ſufficient reaſon for it,) "the thoughts would not "be worth liſtening to, *unconnected, vague and* "*nugatory*." This is granted, Sir, and, therefore, for your credit's ſake, I truſt you will not attempt to utter a ſentence in this way, unleſs you previouſly commit it to memory. This you might do, and thereby have all the glory of an extempore ſpeaker, without the diſgrace of uttering

ing nonſenſe. Then, Sir, you too might "force "people into a belief of your great abilities," and have the pleaſure, which you think extempore Preachers have, of hearing yourſelf "extolled and praiſed as a very fine man, that can "talk better off book, than moſt Parſons can "with their book before them."

In the mean time, Sir, you muſt comfort yourſelf with thinking that you have ſo much "ſenſibility in your frame," if not "piety in "your ſoul," that you can preach (you mean *read*) "with *fervency*, the ſermon which you "have either compoſed in your cloſet, or even "tranſcribed from ſome approved Author." For, "for your own part you know yourſelf "capable of delivering a written diſcourſe in a "manner that ſhall both edify your hearers and "impreſs them with principles of devotion to "God and love to mankind." So that, notwithſtanding the air of gayety you give yourſelf p. 6. we muſt take care how we confound you with

The things that mount the roſtrum with a ſkip,
And then ſkip down again: pronounce a Text;
Cry, *Hem*; and, reading what they never wrote,
Juſt fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And, with a well-bred whiſper, cloſe the ſcene.

Perſuaded, therefore, that it would be doing your congregation and the world (for no doubt, you will communicate the knowledge of your art to others) a real injury to uſe any endeavours to draw you from a practice in which you are ſo great a proficient, and by which, without troubling *God* for the aid of ſupernatural grace, you do *him* and *your fellow* creatures ſuch *eſſential* ſervice, I ſhall forbear adding any more on the ſubject of *extempore Preaching*, but ſhall refer thoſe,

thoſe, who have not your extraordinary talent at *reading*, and who may be prejudiced in favour of the method practiſed by *John the Baptiſt*, by *Jeſus Chriſt*, by his *Apoſtles*, *Prophets*, *Evangeliſts*, and the *firſt Paſtors* of the flock of Chriſt, as well as by the moſt eminent Miniſters of the Word in all nations and ages, almoſt, except our own, to a little Tract, entitled *Reading no Preaching*. This Sir, they will find a ſufficient anſwer to *Biſhop Bull's* Sermon, which you recommend, and to your own obſervations on this ſubject.

And now, Sir, when I have called the attention of your readers to that wonderful ingenuity of yours, whereby "reaſoning analogically," (ſee p. 20.) you deduce (p. 40.) the *cloven foot* of Satan, from the *cloven tongues* of fire, and have diſcovered, contrary to the plain meaning of my words, that I have aſſerted, in the 56th page of my Letters, in oppoſition to my former intimations reſpecting the depravity of the eſtabliſhed Clergy, that "there are not a dozen "Pariſhes in all the kingdom where the Church "Miniſters are notoriouſly wicked," and inculcate "doctrines of a dangerous tendency;" I ſhall paſs on to the 41ſt, page of your Hint, that I may endeavour to remove a part, at leaſt, of the *aſtoniſhment* you are there in, "that Man-"kind ſhould be ſo deluded as to follow the "Miniſtry of theſe men who are only *half-*"*miniſters*. If you are competent, you ſay, to "preach the word of God, year after year, "certainly you muſt be to adminiſter in the "moſt ſolemn offices of that religion you pro-"feſs to teach." True, Sir, and what then? Does it follow becauſe we are *competent* for it, that therefore it is *expedient and neceſſary* we ſhould do it? But you aſk, "Why do you re-

"fuſe

" fuſe to convey this means of ſanctification to " your followers." Why? Out of reſpect to *you* and the reſt of the eſtabliſhed Clergy, and that we may ſeparate from you as *little as poſſible*. In other words, as I obſerved in the very paſſage which you have laſt quoted from my Letters, and to which if you had attended, you would not have needed to make this enquiry, " that our " Societies may, at all opportunities communi- " cate in the eſtabliſhed church," from which as we do not *diſſent*, ſo we wiſh to *withdraw* from it no further than is abſolutely neceſſary.

But I don't wonder *you* ſhould aſk ſuch a queſtion, who are ſo little acquainted with our doctrine, *diſcipline, plan and whole œconomy*, as to charge us with the ſin of *Schiſm*, and entitle your book, *Hints to Methodiſts and other Diſſenters*. The Methodiſts, in general, Sir, whatever they may hereafter become in conſequence of the reproach, inſults and injuries they receive from ſome of the Clergy of the eſtabliſhed Church, are not, at preſent, *Diſſenters*. They do not diſſent from the principle doctrines, nor diſapprove of the ſervice of the Church. They would not even licence their preaching-houſes, nor would their Preachers take licences under the *Toleration Act*, were they not compelled to it for their ſecurity. They *diſſent* only from the corrupt and heterogeneous doctrines brought in, here and there, by many of the Clergy, doctrines unknown to the *Articles, Homilies and Liturgy* of our Church, and from the ungodly lives of its Members. Hence it is that they do not ſet up *altar againſt altar*, but, in general, have ſtill recourſe to the Clergy of the Church of England for the ordinances of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, not becauſe they judge their own Preachers, who diſpenſe to them the word of God,

God, *incompetent* for theſe lower offices, but in order that they may not depart from the eſtabliſhed Church a ſtep further than is neceſſary. And, I truſt, our people and preachers, in general, unmoved by ſuch ignorant and low abuſe as yours, will abide ſtill in the old way; and regardleſs what opinion you, and thouſands more of the Clergy and Laity, may have of us, whether you account us *half-Miniſters*, or *no Miniſters at all*, will ſtill go headily on endeavouring to bring loſt ſinners to God, and to diffuſe true and vital godlineſs through the land.

The Lord, we are well aſſured, hath not ſent us primarily, if at all, to *baptize:* others, who are not called, like us, to go into the *high ways and hedges*, are ſufficiently qualified to perform *that office*. And as to the *Lord's Supper*, however divine and ſolemn an ordinance, and however neceſſary to be attended by the followers of Chriſt, yet it cannot, perhaps, be eaſily ſhewn from the New Teſtament that Chriſt hath made it a *Miniſter's* abſolute duty to *adminiſter it*, (although he hath made it the duty of his people to *receive* it) or that the preſence of a Miniſter is *eſſentially* neceſſary at the adminiſtration of it. But that *a diſpenſation of the Goſpel is committed unto us*, we know, and *woe be to us if we preach not the Goſpel!* For on the knowledge of *this* depends the ſalvation of mankind, but it does not depend on the ordinances being adminiſtered by *this* or *that deſcription of men*. And the Lord hath crowned our endeavours with amazing ſucceſs, and that in the ſmall ſpace of little more than half a century. You have been conſtrained, as we have ſeen, to bear a feeble and ſcanty teſtimony, in this your mixture of ſcurility and abuſe, to the good God has done by us. But a Pamphlet publiſhed lately at Carliſle by Mr. A. Robinſon,

Robinſon, a ſtranger to us, gives, in a few words, a much juſter account of this matter. After obſerving, p. 149. that "the ignorance of the "loweſt orders of the people in religious mat-"ters is ſo notorious in this kingdom, where "two millions a year are paid for their inſtruc-"tion, that none will contend that the propoſed "end, (if that end be inſtruction) of an eſtab-"liſhment is anſwered in them;" he adds, The "Methodiſts, have, in the laſt fifty years, in-"ſtructed more of the lower orders of the peo-"ple in the obligations of Chriſtianity, and "have called more from groſs vice to piety "and virtue, than the Church has ever done "ſince the Reformation. Yet the Clergy for "their ſervices, have been paid, during that "period, by the ſtate, four hundred Millions, "Sterling, while the Methodiſts, have not coſt "Government one farthing, but have been "treated with inſult and contempt by both "Biſhops and Stateſmen. The Methodiſts ſeem "willing to put the whole on the iſſue of this "enquiry, Is there a future ſtate?"

Yes; we are willing to put the whole on the iſſue of this enquiry. That there is a future ſtate we are well aſſured, and therefore (1 Tim. iv. 10.) *both to labour and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe. Being reviled* (1 Cor. iv. 12.) *we bleſs, being perſecuted, we ſuffer it, being defamed we intreat, and though made as the filth of the world and the offſcouring of all things unto this day*, we take it patiently, knowing *that all things work together for good to them that love God, and that he is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love, which* he inclines and enables us to *ſhew toward his* name. We are only aſhamed that

we do and ſuffer *ſo little*; and purpoſe, through divine grace, to give ſtill greater diligence, to ſave our own ſouls, and thoſe that hear us, deſiring to be *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as we know that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

I remain, Rev. Sir,

Your Friend and Servant in Chriſt,

JOSEPH BENSON.

F I N I S.

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